INNS OF COURT SERMONS

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SEVEN SERMONS TO SCHOOLBOYS

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INNS OF COURT SERMONS

BY THE

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The following sermons are a selection from those preached during the past year in the Chapel of Lincoln's Inn in the Chaplain's turn; together with one or two preached at the Temple Church by invitation of the Master. Four of the sermons (the first, second, tenth, and eleventh) had previously been given in the University Pulpit at Oxford, and they are here reduced to their original form. The second sermon was printed at the time in the *Oxford Magazine*, and the substance of the first has been contributed as an article to the *Spectator*.

CONTENTS

I

RELIGIOUS POETRY

"And they sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders."—REV. xiv. 3.

"A NEW song": the word is echoed from the Psalter and from every part of it. "O sing unto the Lord a new song, sing unto the Lord all the whole earth"; "O sing unto the Lord a new song, let the congregation of saints praise him"; "O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things"; "I will sing a new song unto thee, O Lord, for thou hast delivered David thy servant from the peril of the sword"; "I waited patiently for the Lord, and he in-

clined unto me and heard my calling, and he hath put a new song in my mouth." So it was from age to age in Jewry, so it must be throughout the Christian ages; not only because each individual has to learn for himself the beauty and wonder of the universe, and not only because God's compassions are new every morning, and day by day man discovers with ever fresh delight what God has done for his soul; but also because the outward order itself is ever changing, ever moving onward on its predestined path, and "God fulfils Himself in many ways," and so the recognition of the new order requires a new song; and yet again, because the words which in their newest gloss reveal with vividness to one generation this or that aspect of things, become dulled by repetition and perhaps entirely divorced from the reality they once aimed at expressing; being at the best really inadequate to their task.

The lesson urged to-day[1] upon us Churchmen by our Prayer-Book is faithfulness to our prophetic work as stewards of Christ's mysteries, bringing out of the treasury things at once new and old, so as to win the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; and following this lesson, I propose, fathers and brethren, to consider, on this occasion, what are the necessary elements and what the peculiar difficulties of religious poetry. I would ask you to reflect why it is that with so remarkable a genius for poetry as the English people undoubtedly possesses, the least satisfactory part of its achievement is its new song before the throne.

The purpose of all poetry is to illuminate our experience of the world: it is one method of interpreting life to us; and the means it employs to this end are passion

[1] Preached before the University of Oxford, on the third Sunday in Advent, 1896.

and imaginative thought. Passion is of the first necessity, because it is only when the mind is at white heat under the influence of some powerful emotion that the contents of the mind become so thoroughly fused as to flow readily into a new imaginative mould. And the true poet is one who is always passionate: custom lays on him no benumbing finger; he finds in the beauty of the world and in the simple lives of men, with their affections, their sufferings, their heroic endeavours and defeats, perpetual interest, a never-failing spring of emotion, be it joy or sorrow, pity or fear. And then, just as the gift of tongues required its complement in the gift of interpretation, so the poet's endowment is not complete unless he can convey to us the emotion he feels. This he does to a great extent imaginatively; that is to say, the part of experience which moves the poet, and about which he desires to move us, is brought into sudden vivid-

ness through association with some other experience whose value is clearly known. When the Psalmist says, "My days are gone by like a shadow, and I am withered like grass," there arises before our mind, as before his, the picture of some hot Eastern landscape; and as we look at the grass all dry in the sun's glare, there passes over it faster or slower, at the slowest all too fast, the shadow of a bird's wing. And in the light of that image his emotion at the transitoriness of human life becomes ours. All poetry, then, must be a fusion of these two elements, passion and thought.

That illustration from the 102nd Psalm, though it occurs in a religious poem, is not, of course, religious poetry; it is a poetical illumination of a fact of human life, which every one must recognise to be a fact whatever his religion, and perhaps most keenly if he have none. But the facts with which

religious poetry deals are either *not* common matters of experience, or, if they are, they are matters of experience which have already a Christian interpretation; and in this latter case, there is an alternative risk, either that the religious poet will go straight to the facts that have roused his emotion, and represent them apart altogether from their Christian interpretation—or, that the work of reflection that is involved in attending to this interpretation will cool his emotion. The danger is that his Christianity will get the better of his poetry, or his poetry of his Christianity. This will appear more clearly if, following our text, we consider what are the three branches into which religious poetry divides itself. The new song is sung (1) before the throne, and (2) before the living creatures, and (3) before the elders. Man's religious thought and passion must always radiate in these three directions: it will be bent on God, or on nature, or on human life.

The least beset by difficulties and as a rule the most successful religious poetry is that which belongs to the first two classes: lyrical expression of the soul's delight in God, or in the world of nature regarded as His handiwork. In regard to the first of these divisions—the soul's delight in God—the feelings of admiration and hope and love and worship that the poet must express will be so simple that there is small chance of a collision between his instinctive religious emotions (which are to a certain extent Christianised) and his Christian creed; nay, we find it possible to use to-day with not so very much mental reservation and correction the religious lyrics of the Jewish church; though in this case the song, of course, becomes "new" in the sense that we sing it not only before the Father and the sevenfold Spirit, but also before the Lamb in the midst of the throne. In regard to the song before the living creatures—

the soul's delight in nature—the Christian creed is so broad, that provided the beauty of nature be ascribed to God, the Christian can sympathise both with Cowper, who lays the greater stress on God's transcendence, and with Wordsworth, who lays the greater stress on His immanence; nay, even when poets who are not only not Christians, but not Theists, sing about nature, provided they faithfully describe the glory that moves them to song,—the light that most truly is on sea and land for those who have eyes to see it—the spirit in things—

> Be it love, light, harmony,
> Odour, or the soul of all
> Which from heaven like dew doth fall—

I say, if the poet render this faithfully, his song is religious, and the religious man can join in it, and supply the interpretation that is lacking; for he knows that the love and light and harmony are due to the interpenetration of things by the Creator-Spirit

of God. Now in this direct praise of the Godhead which I have been describing, whether it be praise for God's wonderful works in grace or in nature, although the subject-matter of the poet's song may seem for ever the same, the song if it is to carry our hearts with it must be for ever a new song; it must be both fresh felt in passion, and it must be fresh dipt in thought. Most of us are at some time in our lives moved to verse by some strong religious feeling of joy or thankfulness, and the poor success of our endeavours is as a rule due to this, that our thought is not as new as our emotion. A man of genius differs from his fellows in the fact that he has a deeper insight into things, so that they never become commonplaces to him; the simplest thing by the branches it puts out, the ties it suggests to so many things else, is a perpetual source of interest, and the tritest facts

of nature and grace never cease to be a revelation. But it is too often considered that feeling alone is enough equipment for a sacred poet, and then we get, roughly speaking, hymns,—such hymns at least as make up the bulk of our Collections: verses where the facts of revealed religion are gratefully acknowledged, but which bring no fresh insight, no new interpretation, no new light from any quarter, to recreate the experience. I would ask you, whether all the emotional hymns (say) upon our Lord's Atonement strike home so deeply and so freshly to our heart the old truth that "God so loved the world," as those few lines of Shakespeare—

> Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;
> And He that might the vantage best have took
> Found out the remedy?

But the religious poet has not only to sing his song before the throne, and before the living creatures; he must sing it also before

the elders; he has to interpret anew to the Church the Christian interpretation of man's life, its success and failure, its joy and sorrow, its sin and its death. And the reason of the great difficulty he finds here—to which I have already referred—lies in the fact on which St. Paul lays stress—that the natural comes before the spiritual; "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual"; and this in more than one sense.

(1.) The spiritual interpretation of the world, let us say of such a phenomenon as death, does not lie on the surface; and there is a natural explanation which is always ready to present itself. Now, when the poet is deeply stirred by this fact of death, when his passion is liberated, and the world shaken to and fro in his imagination, it is almost necessarily this first natural view of death that possesses him. If, indeed, he is considering the thought of death

abstractly, or even if he is looking forward to it as Browning does in "Prospice," or reflecting upon it long afterwards, like Tennyson in the "In Memoriam," then he will remember he is a Christian; but at first when the shock comes it is not the reflective mind that is at work, recalling and reconsidering the traditional religious interpretation, and perhaps taking fire at that to a re-interpretation; it is the imagination that is at work, roused by passion. The fact of death lies once more in its naked awfulness before the poet, as the world lay before Adam, compelling him to utter the dread name; and shudderingly he names it. It is the final loss that appals him; the lamp is shattered, the wine is spilt; "the silver cord is loosed, the golden bowl broken; the pitcher broken at the fountain, the wheel broken at the cistern." Consider for a moment those verses, wrung from the greatest poet of our own day by the death of his friend:—

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

The sea's voice, breaking on its "cold grey stones," has sung a song of natural and inevitable fate; and the poet has heard and understood; and his song—a song of natural and inevitable fate—a song of loss that might have come from Mimnermus, will echo in the hearts of Englishmen when the "In Memoriam" lies as dusty on the bookseller's shelves as the "Essay on Man" does to-day. Or, to take an even more pointed instance from the same poet, consider the exquisite opening lines of "The Deserted House"—

Life and Thought have gone away
Side by side,
Leaving door and windows wide—

and then consider the intolerable appendix afterwards added to Christianise it,—lines that have neither passion nor thought nor

rhythm. No, "that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and only afterward that which is spiritual"; and the worst is, that before this arrives, the impulse to sing has gone.

(2.) And there is a second sense in which religious poetry is hampered by the precedence of the natural. The heyday of the blood in which the passion is strongest, and the imagination most active, is often a day of revolt against tradition, and especially against that traditional interpretation of the deepest facts of life, which we call Christianity. I need only point to Shelley, expelled for the waywardness of youth from this University, but whose sepulchre has lately been built in his own college with exceptional honour. That Shelley ranked himself as a servant of "the Truth," and lived as resolutely as most Christian people by the highest ideal he could discover, no one would now dispute; but the sad fact remains,

that in his "Ode to Liberty" he branded as "impious," and stamped in the dust with all the passion of his poet's nature, "the name that is above every name."

(3.) But yet again, even where there is no actual revolt against Christianity, it would seem true that whereas the main emotion of Christianity is joy, and its main effort the discovery of "a soul of goodness" in the world's evil, it is the sombre aspects of life which appeal to the poetical sensibility more keenly than its joyful aspects :—

The sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

When Shakespeare tells us that young gentlemen in his day would be sad as night only for wantonness, he is passing a criticism upon the minor poetry of all time ; and even greater poets have sometimes felt themselves called to be like a nerve over which should creep "the else unfelt oppression of the earth." And so much poetry (even that

which calls itself religious) is pessimistic. Still the greater poets, it must be owned, almost always consider it to be their function to look for an optimism on the further side of the pessimism; and thus, even when they do not name the Christian name, they range themselves under the Christian standard.

For this work, a larger canvas is required than is supplied by the pure lyric. When it is attempted in too short compass, either the pessimism must be undervalued, or else the passion of the poet exhausts itself over the pessimism, and the optimism becomes merely abstract—becomes, in fact, gnomic poetry, which is not poetry at all. It must nevertheless be recognised that sometimes this "dialectical" work (if I may so term it) has been accomplished effectively "within the sonnet's humble plot of ground." A very fine instance is Milton's sonnet on his blindness, in which the often-quoted line, "They also serve who only stand and wait," which

is the new thought the poet wins for us, the burden of his new song before the elders, escapes the unimpressiveness usual with gnomic verse, by carrying always with it the passion of what has preceded — the systole and diastole of the poet's heart pleading with his Maker. But it is chiefly in the wide space of the epic, or in the drama with its slow development, its crisis, its catastrophe, that the vindication of the spiritual forces of life is most successfully accomplished. In the Shakespearian drama there is no fate;— no fate at least of which man is not master; and no laws but the laws of the spirit. Of our later poets, Browning has signalised himself by such an endeavour as I am describing: his failures are conspicuous enough; it must, for example, have struck every reader, that in the epilogue to *Dramatis Personæ* where David, Renan, and the poet himself state their views, the poet in Browning has almost inevitably

thrown all the passion and the imagination into the pessimistic view which as a theologian he is combating—and a great deal of Browning's later writing is work of pure reflection, and not imaginative at all; but still his successes are no less conspicuous, and deserve the warmest gratitude of the Christian Church. Consider the vivid illustration he has given in poem after poem to the great Christian dogma that the divine spirit is a spirit of love, that the redemption of man's spirit must be accomplished by love, and that there is no human heart so cold or dead that a spark of redeeming love may not be kindled in it. And take for one example his character of Guido in "The Ring and the Book." The old Pope has seen that the one chance for Guido lies in the truth, that goodness is goodness and that God is not mocked, being flashed upon him by the suddenness of his fate; and so it comes about. No one

familiar with the poem can ever forget the cry that breaks from Guido in the agony of the realised nearness of the death he had dealt so callously to others, and felt so secure from himself; the scream with which he calls upon all possible and impossible saviours, human and divine:—

> Abate, Cardinal, Christ, Maria, God;

and as the climax, the name of his own despised and murdered wife:—

> Pompilia, will you let them murder me?

And this illustration may remind us, and with this I will conclude, what help or what hindrance the poets may render to the Church in her battle against the world and the flesh according as they exalt or despise the spirituality of the marriage tie. In this generation, when a crowd of novelists have been teaching that adultery is the legitimate privilege of both men and women, the great

poets have almost universally held by the Church in their various exhibitions of the deep truth of that primeval covenant by which God indissolubly knits two souls together in a spiritual concord. Especially, as it seems to me, the Church of Christ owes a debt in this matter to a singer lately passed away, whom I would take this opportunity of commending to your gratitude. In middle life, indeed, he had forsaken his own Church of England to join an alien community, against much of whose doctrine and discipline our own Church has for four centuries emphatically protested; and the change was not without unfortunate results upon his thought. The worship of the Blessed Virgin, which he there learnt, was interpreted by him into a mystical theory of the sexes, which spoils, as we must think, some of his later poetry, and we may allow, besides, that the over-familiar form he chose for some of his earlier

and more popular writing, must render it ephemeral, as to a true taste it has always been insipid. But when this is allowed for, there remains a small but excellent body of verse, written always with scrupulous care, and informed always by this great passion, which, as our great Oxford critic said of it many years ago, "always strengthens and purifies"; and for this the Church may thank God. There are doubtless at this moment in the University not a few young men whose thought and passion will one day seek utterance in song: may they never take a less high view of their high calling than Coventry Patmore.

II

MERCY AND TRUTH

"All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth."—PSA. xxv. 10.

"I have not kept back thy loving mercy and truth from the great congregation."—PSA. xl. 10.

"MERCY and TRUTH"—they are familiar words; and just because of their familiarity I ask you to consider them once again. They come over and over in psalm after psalm, so that we are sure the combination is not accidental. "The greatness of thy mercy reacheth unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds." "God shall send forth his mercy and truth—my soul is among lions."

Why "*mercy* and *truth*"? Why these

especially among all the attributes of God? And why such insistence? Surely the youngest of us know so much about God. Yes, because the greatest and most invaluable discoveries, though made often after long years of struggle and failure, are just those that soonest pass into commonplace. And such a discovery was this. The Jewish prophets, searching through all the shifting appearances of human life for some expression behind it of a permanent will—some law that would embrace all the phenomena — fixed upon this category of *mercy* and *truth* as the sufficient term under which to comprise all the manifold variety of their experience. It was a splendid triumph of inspired induction, and more fruitful of consequence to the world than the most famous generalisations of Newton and Laplace. "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth." So it lies for all time, the elementary law of theology.

For what does it mean? It means of course, first of all, that God's nature is mercy, and that to this nature He is consistent, true to Himself; but it means also, and more especially, that in His merciful dealings with us, He has respect to the *truth* of *our* nature. What this truth is we learn on the first page of Genesis: God said, "Let us make man in our image." *Let us make man*—there is mercy, infinite loving-kindness; but *in our image*—there is at once something more than mercy; there is an ideal set up, a standard, a type for the race. And if you will ponder the history of man since, as the great Hebrews have written it for us in the Bible, you will see that the whole secret of its course is but, on the one hand, the persistency with which the God of Truth has kept before men's eyes His original creative purpose, has refused to abate one jot of His lofty ideal

for mankind, has never been content with any degree of human attainment as being high enough for creatures, but has continually called us upward and onward by the mouths of His prophets since the world began, nearer and nearer to the goal — His own image; and then, side by side with this, the no less marvellous persistence of His *mercy*, with which He has helped forward this purpose, has found means to make it not impossible, has retrieved our fall, has forgiven failure, has striven with want of interest, has pacified murmuring, and healed backsliding, and strengthened feeble hands and feeble knees, — has, in fact, "beset us behind and before" with blessings and sorrows, shame and grace, hopes and fears, "fine nets and stratagems to catch us in," if by any means He could compel the obstinate sheep to come into the fold, if by any means He could constrain the callous clay to bear

His impress. This then was the Jews' philosophy of history: as they looked upon the long procession of centuries winding out of the dark backward of time, they were persuaded that it was indeed a process leading to some goal; that the blessings were not merely comforts bestowed by some Baal sun-god in a generous mood, but were "means of grace," helps on the way, encouragements, tokens of affection. And similarly they were persuaded that the calamities they experienced, "the sword and the famine, and the noisome beast and the pestilence," were not capricious or vindictive, but were *judgments*, or *warnings*, sent with the same constant and merciful purpose "that they might set their hope in God." "When he slew them, they sought him, and turned them early and enquired after God. And they remembered that God was their strength, and that the high God was their Redeemer."

And so they summed up their conviction that "*All* the paths of the Lord were mercy," and "*all* the paths of the Lord were truth"; and between the mercy and the truth they could not separate.

For us, brethren, this profound intuition of the Hebrew prophets into the divine character and purpose has been confirmed and almost superseded by the evidence given in Jesus Christ our Lord. "We saw his glory," says St. John, "and we bear witness of it: it was the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of *grace* and *truth*." We knew Him to be divine because of this "mercy and truth," which is a note of the divine nature. See, for a moment, how this was so.

Look (1.) at the *ideal* that Christ proposed to mankind. Is it not the old creation promise that man should be conformed to God's image? Christ is Himself the "express image" of God, and nothing

short of that image will satisfy Him in us. The applauded righteousness of scribes and Pharisees will not suffice; nay, the righteousness of Moses himself will not suffice; nor that of the prophets; not even of the last and greatest, John Baptist: the standard must go higher—"Be ye perfect, like your Father in heaven."

Is not this voice of Christ the voice of the God of TRUTH, who intends us to fulfil the true end of our creation, and to be made like unto Him? Is it not also the voice of the God of MERCY? For He makes it possible for us to strive after this perfection by His: "Come unto me, learn of me." What but divine righteousness could have set such a glorious end before us? what but divine love would have deemed us capable of responding to such a claim?

(2.) Or start from the other side of the matter. Contemplate the miracles of mercy. Follow the crowd as they throng the

Wonder-worker and cry, "He hath done all things well." Merciful indeed He is, but there is a note about Him that seems more than mere compassion. It is plain that this mercy of Christ aimed at something beyond making the people comfortable. What is this faith He requires? How often were the miracles of healing at the same time miracles of conversion. "Behold thou art made whole," He said to the impotent man, "*sin no more*, lest a worse thing happen unto thee." Nay, it is recorded that when a paralytic was brought to Him, He ministered at once to his spirit, and only healed the body to prove that He had healed the soul. Here too, then, in the miracles we see that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is plainly divine grace, is mercy and truth, is that love of God which is bent upon creating His own image in us.

(3.) But again, you will recollect that it

was this very forgiveness of sins which to the righteous of the time seemed to argue insensibility, as though our Lord were being falsely merciful — ministering mercy at the expense of morality. He disregarded, for example, the excommunication of the publicans. And the charge is sometimes repeated still. What shall we say? How can we test Christ's mercy to men's souls to see if it be that *true* mercy which considers the end? We must try it by its effect on character. What was the outcome? Have we any record? The story of Zaccheus may suffice. Here was a man who had grown rich upon plunder, and our Lord deigned to sup with him. Did such condescension seem to Zaccheus a sign of insensibility? Surely never had any but divine mercy, which is also truth, such converting results. "Zaccheus stood forth and said, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have

done wrong to any man, I will restore fourfold."

(4.) Similarly we might make our appeal to Christ's teaching, to His simple parables, or His paradoxical epigrams, and show how their glorious web is woven of the same two strands. For the occasion let that one word suffice, in which more than any other He summed up for us His revelation of the Creator — I mean the word Father. No word will so well bring home to us the essential nature of the divine mercy and truth; for it makes its appeal to our own experience of human fatherhood, treating it as a shadow of the divine. "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven?" We, too, speak of true love, meaning by that a love which regards the true interest of the loved ones; which does not spoil them, frustrate them of their ideal, dwarf their

spiritual stature, stop their progress to perfection. And so, drawing analogy from this familiar experience, Christians are bold to include under the single notion of God's Fatherhood many apparently inconsistent experiences of their lives: their experience of God's watchful Providence, and yet no less of their permitted independence; His trial of their faith, and again His help in the trial; His granting and refusing petitions; His zeal for righteousness and the forgiveness of sins; His forgiving and yet punishing: and may we not add His revelation of both Hell and Heaven in the world to come? Does not that question, so often handled, of the possibility in the nature of God of eternal punishment find its solution, not in any balancing of God's mercy against His truth, as though these were opposite qualities, but in the thought that whatever is appointed in a world where "God is all in all" must be both "mercy

and truth," *i.e.* what is best for every soul? The fires of hell cannot be anything else than the still soliciting fires of God's true mercy striving as ever to mould the heart of man into His image. But can the heart of man become so hardened as eternally to resist God's influences? Is it possible? Is it credible? If to-day any soul hear God's voice, let it not by resisting yet once more increase the evidence for the eternal possibility!

Brethren, it is of supreme importance to the reality of our Christian life that we should refuse to separate between these divine attributes of *Mercy* and *Truth;* that we should not say simply "God loves us," without drawing out the implicit truth, "and wishes us to be like Himself." The true test of our theology is worship; because the spirit of worship includes and reconciles the spirit of love and the spirit of holy fear, which are our creaturely

recognition of the divine mercy and truth. Do not say such loving fear is unevangelical. There is, of course, a parody of it which is unchristian, a fear which has torment, an abject cringing which uses words of love to propitiate, and would welcome no gospel with such transport as the news that the tyrant was dead—the spirit which our great religious poet has drawn out in his study of Caliban:

> Lo, lieth flat and *loveth* Setebos!

But we have not received the spirit of slaves; we have received the spirit of sonship, which appeals to God as Father. The love of true *sonship* cannot exclude awe and reverence, and worship, which is the expression of these. Christ Himself, says the Apostle, was heard for His godly fear. Let us compare our sonship with His sonship; let us especially note whether, like His, our filial piety expresses itself in

prayer. There can be no true love of any sort without reverence, least of all filial love. Plato noted it for a sign of degeneration in a State when the love of children was held to dispense with fear: it is no less a sign of degeneration in a Church. It will be clear, then, that it is not enough for Christians to acknowledge God, unless the God they acknowledge be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of mercy and truth. The present age is witnessing a growing revival of mysticism; and mysticism, with all its advantages, has this one serious danger, that it is apt to be too vague about the nature and attributes of the God with whom it seeks communion. Many of you have, I doubt not, read the beautiful and inspiring book of the Belgian mystic, which he calls *Le Trésor des Humbles*; no one, I should hope, could read that book without being in many ways the better for it. We stand

deeply in need of such prophets to remind us that "the world is charged with the grandeur of God," and that every place may be a house of God to the man who will but live in it with open eyes. But when, side by side with this, we read, "What God that is indeed on the heights but must smile at our gravest faults as we smile at the puppies on the hearth-rug?" then it behoves us to remember that we are not only the creatures of God, but His children, made in His image, and growing into His likeness, and that the amiable smile of mercy which is careless of truth must be even further from His lips than it is from the best fathers whom we know.

Our second text reminds us that not only have we to acknowledge God's mercy and truth, we have to display it in relation to our fellows: "not to keep it back from the congregation." If our work be to

manifest God's glory, there must meet in it God's mercy and truth. Now, how easy it is to be content, according to our disposition, with a mercy that is not His mercy, or a truth that is not His truth!

Consider, for example, those great typical Christian actions of *forgiveness* and *judgment*. What a poor parody they too often are of their divine originals! For forgiveness, easy toleration or disdainful pity; for judgment, wrath, clamour, and evil speaking. Whereas every act of Christian forgiveness or of Christian judgment implies the other; *each* implies both a standard of righteousness and a love of mercy. If we forgive anything, or if we condemn anything, it can only be "in the person of Christ," by sharing both His hatred of sin and His love for the sinner.

Or again, consider that question of

veracity and compliment which, slight as it may appear, fills our social lives. To some it is easy to be outspoken, to say just what they think regardless of what feelings they wound; to others it is as easy to say pleasant things that hurt no susceptibilities. Neither temper can boast itself over the other, because each is a natural instinct, not a spiritual quality. To become spiritual each must take from the other what itself lacks. And so, if we are apt to give our criticisms without mercy, let us take to heart St. Paul's maxim, "speaking the truth *in love*"; if, on the other hand, we find it only too easy to be gracious, let us remember that other great word of his: "Let your speech be always with grace, *seasoned with salt*."

Again, there is the question of almsgiving. If our mercy to the poor is to be true mercy it must never be separated from a consideration of their high welfare. This cuts at the

root of all careless giving: it forbids us to act upon mere sentiment; sentiment may be better for us than insensibility, but it may do more harm. The priest in our Lord's parable, and the Levite who stands for the religious layman, are certainly not our examples in charity; but neither would the Samaritan have been if he had omitted to pour in the oil and wine which the special case demanded, and had passed on with an easy conscience after administering the two pence.

Finally, we must bring under the same divine law our conduct to *ourselves*. It is perhaps matter for regret that the framers of our Church Catechism have ignored the "Duty to oneself," which formed a division of the old Catechism of Dean Colet, on which ours was largely based. Perhaps they thought the fact of there being such a duty needed no insistence: "No man," says the Apostle, "ever hated his own

flesh"; but just because self-love is instinctive it needs to be reflected upon in order to be qualified.

May I to the younger of my hearers say a word about pleasure? What should be our rule about this mercy to ourselves? Shall it not be still the same divine rule that the mercy must be mixed with truth? It must regard the true end of our nature, and be such as to minister to our efficiency. Any apparent mercy which impedes our true welfare, which spoils instead of refreshing, must be wrong. On the other hand, any pleasure within our means which recreates us when we are weary, and leaves us happier than it found us, must be right. It was a fine answer of a saint—I think St. Philip Neri—to the meddler who was shocked to find him playing chess, and asked what he would do if he knew the world would end to-morrow—"I should go on playing chess."

And then a word in conclusion as to the

difficulty sometimes expressed about reconciling the conflicting claims of these two duties to ourselves and our neighbour. The Scripture precept is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself*," i.e. thou shalt make it thine endeavour that thy neighbour may be as happy as thou. It does not say, "Why are you happy?" but "Why are they unhappy?" and so it implies a wish and an effort to give these others, our less fortunate neighbours, the opportunity of sharing in the things that have proved a means of true happiness to ourselves. A Christian will say, "I must first of all help these others to claim their privileges in the kingdom of Christ; and secondly, I must help to make possible for them the sweet dignity of a Christian home." And no Christian, whose conscience is once roused, can any longer be happy in his church or in his home, unless he be doing his best to share these blessings with those that need them. I

would venture to press this consideration on those who are still happy with the spontaneous happiness of youth, especially those, if there be any here, who have recently made for themselves homes. We all remember a picture by a popular artist of a young man leading out of church his bride, while at the door sits a lazar in his rags holding up the crucifix. The young man is startled, and the joy seems to die out of the wedding bells. Why? What is the appeal of those outstretched arms? Is it that a man has no right to live happily with the wife whom he loves, because other men are widowed? Is it that a young man may not rejoice in his youth, because others are aged? Surely these things—youth and wedded love—are gifts of God, as the Preacher understood long ago; but he saw also that for their use God will bring us into judgment. And the judgment will be this, as we can see from the Gospel:

"Knowing delight, did you share it? What joy radiated from your happy dwelling on the homeless homes? What crumbs fell from your full table into starving mouths? To what sick chambers did you bring the welcome light of your countenance?" What will you say?—that you were still living in an ideal world—in a Paradise; that it was enough for you as yet to make each other happy? To say so is to outrage the name of love and the name of joy in which you plead. Make them both true, your love true, your joy true, by exorcising selfishness, and you will make them divine, and therefore eternal.

III

BELIEF IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

"This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."—ACTS ii. 16, 17.

THERE is a widespread heresy, which, so far as I know, has no name, because it is not theoretical but practical.[1] The heresy I have in mind acknowledges only two persons in the Godhead; it confesses, indeed, a belief in all three Persons, but while in God the Father, and in God the Son, it sincerely believes, it practically disbelieves in God the Holy Spirit.

The causes underlying this unbelief are

[1] In this respect it would differ from that of the *Pneumatomachi.*

twofold. The first is our picturesque habit of thought. What we call our thinking is often little more than arranging things in a mental picture. Accordingly, when we hear in the Creed about God the Father, the mind makes for itself the grandest image it can of an almighty, all-righteous, all-loving Potentate, seated upon His throne, far above the sky; and with this picture before our minds, we find it possible to believe in God the Father and pray to Him. In the same way when we hear about God the Son, an image springs up before us, suggested by some picture of Fra Angelico or Raphael—a tender, sorrowful face, to which we are attracted, in which therefore we can believe, and to which we can pray. But when we hear about God the Holy Spirit, our accustomed habit of mind fails us. How can we picture a Spirit —all-pervading, invisible, working within ourselves? We cannot. And because our imagination fails, our belief is apt to fail

also. The very solidity, so to speak, of our imagination of the Father and the Son, our conception of them as clothed with our separate human attributes, prevents our accepting and realising the Christian doctrine, that they live Their lives in each other, the Father finding in the Son the eternal object of His love, and both working upon the world in the Holy Spirit.

And yet the same dependence upon our imagination would lead us, if we were consistent, to ignore the reality of our own human spirits; it would shut us up into simple materialism, and forbid us to believe in anything which we could not touch and handle; for nothing can be pictured but what has bodily substance. And if we shrink with horror from regarding ourselves as simply our shape of flesh, and refuse to surrender our gospel of immortality because we cannot picture the disbodied spirit, should we not also be on our guard against the

practical surrender of our faith in that greater Spirit, with whom our spirits may have communion, the Advocate, the Comforter, "the strong-siding Champion" in the day of distress and temptation?

(2.) The second cause of this unbelief is that we are unconscious of the communion and fellowship of the Divine Spirit with our own. The Spirit gives no sign of His presence in shock or thrill; there is no noise of wind, no visible tongue as of fire. We think and speak and act; and it is we ourselves who think and speak and act. Sometimes our thoughts and deeds are not good, and when we come to a better mind, we take the blame for our misconduct; sometimes we are satisfied to have done right in a difficult matter, and the effort that our action has cost persuades us that the deed was our very own. In both cases we feel our freedom, and acknowledge our responsibility. We are unconscious in our nature

of any holy or unholy visitant—persuading or dissuading.

But here again we must not erect our consciousness into a test of reality. How many things there are even in our physical nature which go on unconsciously to ourselves. Take the simple fact of growth. As our children grow up from childhood, they seem to themselves the same as ever; they are not conscious of the change which to every one else is so remarkable. And so it is with the work of grace in their hearts. We watch the change that passes over them as they yield themselves to the influence of the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of the Enemy,—we see them growing better or growing worse,—and it is the brightest or the saddest sight in the world; and all the time they are unconscious of any change. The proof of whether we have the Spirit that proceeds from the Father and the Son, is not our consciousness of it, but the fact of our growth in

likeness to Christ; and of this other people may be better judges than ourselves.

If we wish, then, to get rid of our practical disbelief in the Holy Ghost, to reassure our hearts that the Holy Spirit of God is no figure of speech, but a living force in the world that inspires men's hearts to do and suffer, we may well begin by observing the signs of His presence in those with whom our lives are cast. The signs are clearly laid down in the pages of Scripture, and when we see them, our hearts acknowledge them: Christian affection which will take trouble; Christian long-suffering and gentleness which do not despair; Christian contentment which bears about with it a smiling face; Christian temperance and soberness of living. On the other hand, where we recognise the sad signs of hatred or envy or jealousy; or again, of covetousness or sensuality; then we recognise, though we may keep our thoughts to ourselves, that the spirit which

is in the world has overcome the spirit that is of God.

But there are other signs that we may note. There is especially this sign of prophecy of which the text speaks, the enthusiastic union of hearts in devotion to some ideal, some vision more or less clearly discerned of the kingdom of God. Again and again in the history of the Christian Church has the Spirit of God filled men with such enthusiasm that the cynical onlooker has thought them "full of new wine." There was, for example, that great missionary impulse of the first age, whose history is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles; there was the more than heroic zeal that kindled the martyrs in the ages of persecution; there was the keen interest in truth which called together the Great Councils, and compiled the creeds, and anathematised heresies; there was the vivid realisation of a world unseen that bore itself witness in

the spread of monasteries, and the compassion for the misery and ignorance of the poor which founded the orders of preaching friars; there was the revolt against formalism in worship which produced the Reformation. These great movements and others akin to them, both before and since, are parallel in the world of spirit to the sudden descent upon the world of nature of a rushing mighty wind, rooting up old things whose stock is decayed, and sowing the seeds of new life. As we look back we can see that these were Pentecostal seasons, when the Spirit was given without measure to sons and daughters, servants and handmaids, and strange results followed. What is our spiritual enthusiasm to-day? In looking round for an answer to the question, we must not look for any supernatural evidence. Those who took part in the movements I have referred to were equally with ourselves without supernatural evidence that they were

being swayed in their undertakings by the Spirit of God. They would not be conscious of any power acting upon their will; there would have been in every case much deliberation and balancing of judgments and confusion of plan; much opposition to confront, as well as some admixture of a baser element. But those who kept their eyes single and sincere would have had no doubt that the thing was of God. May we not then, looking at the tide of national feeling that has swept over the land, believe that this new strong sense of racial brotherhood may be intended, in the providence of God, to work out results which He has foreordained? Whence came this passionate sense of unity? We cannot tell; but we know that it is not the work of politicians. Whither will it carry us? Again we cannot tell; only we can see that it chimes in with the strong sense of social brotherhood that has been growing among Englishmen in the past half century;

inspiring a keener love of justice, and the desire to give every one, so far as it depends upon our will, a happy life and joy in his labour. May God, "who makes men of one mind in a house," inspire us all in this matter with a double portion of His Spirit, both of spiritual strength and of wisdom.

But independently of these great movements which from time to time sweep down upon the Church, and carry men's hearts on a new course, there are always inspirations of some good to be accomplished, dreams and visions of some divine perfection to be realised here and now by our instrumentality, which the Holy Spirit vouchsafes to the sons and daughters of the Church of God. I would ask which of all this Christian company has not had his dream, a dream that was meant to be a prophecy? In your first boyhood it was to be St. George and slay the dragon; what is it now? Is it still a dream of doing some deed of bravery and

heroism that the ears of all who hear of it shall tingle? Is it a dream of setting your name among those who by their valour and self-sacrifice have deserved well of their country? Is it a dream of warfare, not by sword but by voice or pen, against the tyrannies that still survive in a free state,—against bad dwellings, bad wages, bad education—"to build Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land"—or is it something more personal than this, the dream of a life of goodness, the beatitude of the pure in heart, to see God? Some vision each Christian child has had, some dream from the Holy Spirit; and the success or failure of each life depends upon whether that vision is still "the fountain light of all our day, the master light of all our seeing," or whether we have lived to see it fade away, and have come to smile over the enthusiasm of youth. Faith in the Holy Spirit means faith in the vision that He

sends; the only success in life comes from such faith, the only failure in life is faithlessness. Not, of course, that life must be dreamed away. The vision comes first, and then is to come the realisation. The dream, the desire, is like the cloudy pillar that led the Israelites: it led, but they had to follow; and it led them through a wilderness. And so our visions, if they be from God, will often lead us where to follow will task all our endurance. There may be scarcity of water, and some of it bitter; there will be much temptation to murmur; there will be temptation to go back to Egypt and the flesh-pots, and leave following the cloud; there will be fighting to be done, and false witness to be endured, and, hardest of all, the faithlessness of friends; but for all that, the way lies forward and not back; the Promised Land is only just beyond the mountains; and in the fire and cloud, through all the wandering, is the

Presence of God. "Your young men shall see visions"! May they never surrender their divine privilege; never be false to their birthright of faith and hope; never bargain it away, like Esau, for one mess, here and now, of the red pottage!

"And your old men shall dream dreams." There is no sight so beautiful in the world as the enthusiastic faith of an old man; there is no sight so sad as an old man who has outlived the visions of his youth. It is possible that a long life may be quite valueless, because wholly selfish; or that its only virtue may one day be found to lie far back among the forgotten dreams of youth, before the chambers of the heart were swept clean of all faith and love; in something believed in and longed for and prayed for, in childhood. Some of us may have known such an one, in whom some vulgar lust cast out, as it seemed, all the nobility the seeds of which God planted there; who

devoted all his force, all his powers of mind, to the attainment of some merely personal ambition—

> Till age and sad experience, hand in hand,
> Led him to death, and made him understand,
> After a toil so painful and so long,
> That all his life he had been in the wrong.

But for those who through struggle and failure and partial success have kept clear in view the heavenly vision, who in age as in youth dream dreams of God's coming kingdom, of His accomplished redemption of the world,—who are more happy than they? For at any moment, at the summons of death, the vision may for them become a reality, and they shall see the King in His beauty, and behold the land that seemed so very far off.

IV

THE REASONABLENESS OF WORSHIP AND CAUSES OF ITS NEGLECT

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."—ROM. xii. 1.

WE feel, in reading this text, that the Churches to whom St. Paul addressed his letters must have been very like the congregations of our English Church to-day if they were attracted, as no doubt the Apostle intended to attract them, by the word "reasonable." He says to the Romans "this is your reasonable worship," just as he says to the Corinthians, "I speak to intelligent men, judge what I say!" And

there is nothing, of course, unworthy or inconsistent in such an appeal. For while the Apostle is never tired of repeating that no human intelligence could have devised the gospel of Christ, which struck a hard blow at human self-satisfaction; and while he insists again and again that the highest faculties of human nature, those by which we take rank in the eyes of God, are not the reasoning powers, but faith, hope, and love; he is always ready to admit a large place in the Christian life for the use of human intelligence. "Be not children," he says, "in understanding"; and again, "Not as fools but as wise, redeeming the opportunity." And, indeed, to disparage the human mind in the very act of addressing himself to it would have been an impossible piece of folly for so humane a thinker as St. Paul. St. Paul never makes an attempt to prove the Christian faith; the only demonstration of which he thought it capable was the

evident power of the Spirit in the new life of the Christian Church; his gospel is not a demonstration but an announcement; he placards before men Christ crucified and risen, of which fact he was a witness; but when the Christian faith has been accepted, then comes in his appeal to reason; then he labours to show that his gospel squares with all we already know of God's action in the world; and he draws out all its practical consequences for everyday life. So it is here. Up to this point in the epistle he has been exposing in vast panorama the long-hidden mystery of God's merciful purposes for both Jews and Gentiles, showing that his gospel is only part of a large scheme of divine providence; afterwards, in the chapters that conclude the book, he gives a number of particular precepts for the new life. But in the first verse of this chapter he passes from the one to the other with a solemn and passionate counsel to worship.

He has pictured before their eyes in its fulness the Christian creed, he proceeds to picture for them the Christian character. But what is to be the link between them, how is the creed to produce the character? The answer is, through worship, by the deliberate offering of the will. "I beseech you *therefore*, brethren, by these mercies of God which I have rehearsed, to make offering to God of your bodies, and so not conform your conduct to the world." As though he said, "I have expounded to you the Christian creed, that you are creatures made and redeemed by God; I urge upon you the Christian character; but the character cannot come from the creed except through the mediation of worship, resting upon gratitude. You must acknowledge that God made you, and if so, that your body is God's; that Christ redeemed you, and if so, that your body is God's by a still stronger title; that the Holy Spirit dwells in you, and

if so, that your body is God's by the strongest title of all; owning this with joy, your gratitude will make acknowledgment of it in the deliberate act of worship, in which you present your bodies to God for His own purposes, as "a living sacrifice." This then is St. Paul's appeal for, and justification of, Christian worship, that it is the medium through which the Christian character issues out of the Christian creed, because it is the explicit and emphatic acknowledgment of all God's mercy to us, and so of His claim upon our life.

We also, Christians of the twentieth century, cannot but admit that worship so justified is reasonable. If it is by God's mercy that we are what we are, if it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves, if He sustains us in being from moment to moment, and surrounds us with compassions which are new every morning, —a sense of such mercies and of those

particular blessings of which we are each conscious in our individual lives must send us before His presence with thanksgiving. Nothing could be more reasonable than such worship from the creature to the Creator. "What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a God!" And when we go on to recollect that God's mercies have not been limited to the creation of so wonderful "a piece of work," or to its preservation, but reached on to a great act of redemption; to effect which the Son of God took a human body and lived in it, for our sakes, the life of a man as man was meant to live it—a life of love and obedience to the Father in heaven; and that, too, in a world which we had rendered intolerant of godliness, so that the human body of Christ, in making its required creaturely and filial

offering of its own will to the Father's will, had to make it at the cost we know;—remembering this, will not the claim of God upon these bodies so redeemed seem to us a thousand times more imperative? Still less, if possible, shall we seem our own, being bought at such a price. And therefore in our highest act of Christian worship, which commemorates the whole of our Saviour's life of self-offering for us to the Father, summed up into its final scene—"A body hast thou prepared me: then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God"—we who are redeemed by the offering of that body, of that perfected will, with the sense of that mercy once more quick in our hearts, take the words into our own lips, and say: These bodies Thou hast prepared for us, O God; lo, we also come to do Thy holy will. "Here we—we also in and through Christ—present unto Thee ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable,

holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee." The *Sursum Corda*, the offering of the heart and will, has been an integral part of the Eucharist from the earliest Christian age; and it could not have been otherwise. "Lift up your hearts. We lift them up unto the Lord." No service could be more reasonable. Every Christian who knows his Creed and is grateful, must acknowledge that it is meet and right so to do, "very meet, right, and our bounden duty." Worship, then, we must agree with St. Paul, is reasonable, because it depends immediately upon the great facts of God's mercy to us; because it is the creaturely acknowledgment that we owe all we are to the Creator; because it is the filial offer of homage and love and obedience to the Father in heaven. It is the inevitable form into which our Creed must translate itself if it is to have any influence upon our character.

Why, then, we may ask, are there so many

Christians who do not worship? The fact will probably not be disputed; though a variety of causes may be assigned for the neglect.

(1.) The first and most obvious reason would be the failure to realise the Christian Creed, either through entire ignorance, as might easily happen among the thronging population of our large cities; or through the dulness that comes over the mind through settled custom. With the first of these causes the Church is zealously grappling; there are missions hard at work, though not enough for the need, and the religious education in schools is improving, though it is still far from satisfactory. But what cure is there for the eye diseased by custom, that is not blind but does not see; for the mind that can rehearse its Creed without a gleam of gratitude? The only hope lies still in the continued loving-kindness of God, who surrounds us with fresh mercies of joy and sorrow day by day; for

there is always hope that one of these may pierce in to the quick of the heart, and set flowing once more the current of life.

(2.) But there are other causes for the neglect of worship, and one is a feeling that God is beyond our gratitude and cannot care for it. Such a feeling, which is perhaps not uncommon, rests upon the habit we have of emptying our idea of God of all thought and emotion under pretence of exalting it; just as in our modern Church windows we empty the faces of the saints of all expression to make sure they shall be holy. Now such an idea of God is as philosophically unsound as it is spiritually deadening, for if man is created by God, God cannot be less than man, and a God without emotion and thought and will would be less than man;[1] but apart from that, it is

[1] I should like to refer upon this subject to a lecture by my friend and colleague, the Rev. H. Rashdall, in *Doctrine and Development*, p. 268.

radically unchristian. We Christians know God as He was revealed by and in Jesus Christ, and the whole teaching and practice of our Lord represents God as caring for us as a father cares for his children. Can any one read our Lord's parable of the Prodigal Son, and deny that Christ meant to attribute to God emotions of gladness at the return of His child from the far country? But we have more direct evidence still. When our Lord healed the lepers, and only one of them came back to thank Him, He commented sadly upon their ingratitude: "There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." When we Christians speak of God as Spirit or as personal, we mean that He is one with whom persons, with whom spirits, can have fellowship; one who knows and loves and is almighty. And a man who believes that can hardly refuse to pay his homage on a plea of reverence.

(3.) Again, worship is sometimes disregarded from a notion, not always clearly defined, that it has become superseded in modern religion by practical philanthropy. I once accompanied a crowd of persons round a gallery of pictures upon which a clergyman was discoursing; and presently we came to a picture of the woman in the Pharisee's house anointing our Lord's feet with precious ointment. The Evangelist tells us that the practical philanthropists present on the occasion were disgusted at the waste; but Jesus said, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be told for a memorial of her." And so the lecturer upon the pictures told the story; and having told it, he made this comment: "In old days that was thought to be religion; we have learned better now; we know now that religion means doing one's duty and loving one's

neighbour." I could not help feeling, as I listened, that possibly the Founder of our faith knew better than His modern interpreter wherein lay the essence of religion, and was not undervaluing brotherly love when He said that the root of these things lay in devotion to Himself. If there is to be a controversy between worship and philanthropy, it will be but a new form of that ancient controversy between faith and works, which the Scripture decides in favour of faith; not because works of righteousness are unimportant, but because faith in God is the ground of all such works, the root of the tree which bears such heavenly fruit. And faith that fills the heart must find its way to the lips as well as to the hands and feet.

(4.) But once more, it is worth asking whether the present comparative neglect of worship may be due in some degree not to the fault of the worshipper but to

some defect in the worship. It is in accordance with human nature to seek a common expression for common feelings; and if men are found to abstain in the exercise of their highest emotions from what they instinctively seek in more secular matters, in politics, in art, in the various societies of friendship, namely, the union of hearts in a common aspiration, one reason may well be that they do not find in our ordinary public worship that strong, uplifting sense of reality and fellowship that they find in these other associations. And if that is so, the fact should be faced, and a remedy sought. The statement that worship is not for man's profit but for God's glory may be true, but then nothing can be for God's glory that hinders man's spiritual profit; and St. Paul lays it down that the principle which must govern public worship is that of edification: "Thou truly givest thanks well, but thy brother is not edified." There

are undoubtedly Christian men and women who do not find their religious emotions released by the form of service, admirable as it seems to others, into which our choir offices have hardened. They feel a want of spontaneity, a want of unity in intention as of a single act of worship. Men, indeed, are not all made of one emotional substance, nor are they all on the same level of intellectual culture, and it is hardly to be expected that they should all be able to worship with a free heart in the same type of service.

Strangely enough, in defiance of this fact, and in open disregard of the want of attractive power in so much of the religious worship of to-day, the attempt is being made, and is even being organised into a political enterprise, to curtail still further the present liberty and variety in public worship, by forbidding certain dramatic and symbolic elements which, as a matter of fact, are

found, among large masses of our poorer and simpler brethren, to make the idea of worship real and appealing, while the typical cathedral matins and evensong, with their florid canticles, fill them with dismay. Such an attempt at repression must strike every religious and, indeed, every reflecting mind as singularly mistimed and unwise. An ancient father well said that Christ's coat was without seam, and yet the mystical garment of the Church was wrought with divers colours; by which he implied that unity is not uniformity—a lesson which Englishmen, it would seem, have still to learn. They have also to learn that nothing so surely kills worship as controversy about its form. It must be the Church's prayer that the present controversy may speedily come to an end without poisoning the minds of simple people against holy things, and making all worship impossible to them; and further, that whatever forms of service have

been found in practice to kindle men's aspirations heavenward may find toleration in our national Church.[1] There is a picture

[1] Some three hundred years ago, when toleration was far less understood and far less generally practised than it is to-day, and when the same two parties of Puritans and Ritualists, representing two ineradicable tendencies in human nature, stood face to face as they are standing to-day, Francis Bacon addressed to the Queen a paper concerning Church controversies, the recommendations in which were far too wise for the statesmanship of his own day, but may find, one hopes, a more favourable soil in our own.

"The present controversies," he says, "do not concern the great parts of the worship of God, of which it is true that there will be kept no unity in believing except it be entertained in worshipping; but we contend about ceremonies and things indifferent; in which kind if we would but remember that the ancient and true bonds of unity are 'one faith, one baptism,' and not one ceremony, one policy; if we would observe the league among Christians penned by our Saviour, 'He that is not against us is with us'; if we could but comprehend that saying, 'The diversities of ceremonies do set forth the unity of doctrine,' and that other, 'Religion hath parts which belong to eternity and parts which pertain to time'; and if we did but know the virtue of silence and slowness to speak commended by St. James,—our controversies of themselves would close up and grow together; but most especially if we would leave the overweening and turbulent humours of these times, and revive the blessed proceeding of the Apostles and Fathers of the primitive Church, and say, 'Brother, if that which you set down as an assertion you would deliver by way of advice, there were reverence due to your counsel, whereas faith is not due to your affirmation.' St. Paul was content to speak thus, 'I, and not the Lord; this is my counsel'; but now men do too lightly say, 'Not I, but the Lord.'"

As to the particular charge which underlay, and still underlies,

of the worshipping world in the Book of Revelation, which, if we study it, may teach us many lessons. St. John saw the throne in heaven, and Him who sat thereon, and round about the throne four-and-twenty elders sitting, clothed in white robes, with crowns of gold; and beneath the throne he saw four living creatures,—a lion, and a calf, and a flying eagle, and one with

the Puritan attack, Bacon says: "They think it the true touch-stone to try what is good and evil, by measuring what is more or less opposite to the institutions of the Church of Rome; that is ever more perfect which is removed most degrees from that Church, and that is ever polluted and blemished which participateth in any appearance with it. This is a subtle and dangerous conceit for men to entertain; apt to delude themselves, more apt to delude the people, and most apt of all to calumniate their adversaries."

Once more, as to the controversial temper he says: "The honourable names of sincerity, reformation, and discipline are put in the foreground, so that their contentious and evil zeal cannot be touched except these holy things be first thought to be violated. But howsoever they infer our solicitation for the peace of the Church to proceed from carnal sense, yet I will conclude even with the Apostle Paul, 'While there is among you strife, and contention, are *ye* not carnal'; and howsoever they esteem the compounding of controversies to savour of man's wisdom and human policy, and think themselves led by the wisdom which is from above, yet I say with St. James, 'This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work.'"

the face of a man,—who rested not day and night saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." But we may ask, How do the living creatures of the world, as a matter of fact, worship God, and give Him honour and thanks? The answer is, They perform His will; they follow the paths He has prescribed for them. And because man also is among the creatures, for man also to perform the will of God, in whatever blind instinctive way, must be for God's praise. It is a thing to be thankful for if men, from whatever motive, will, as Marcus Aurelius says, "work the works of a man," do righteousness and show mercy. Our Lord, in the picture He draws of the judgment of the heathen world, says nothing about worship, and divides them, as sheep from goats, solely by the standard they have acknowledged of duty to each other. Because they knew not

God, their duty to their neighbour was accepted as their duty to God: "Inasmuch as ye did it to my brethren, ye did it unto me." And so we must recognise that wherever men obey conscience and do right, even though they are ignorant of God, they are joining in the great anthem of the universe, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

But as members of the Church of Christ we can do more than this. The Church looks out over the universe, and interprets its actions; it makes the inarticulate voice of praise articulate, and presents it to God. When the four living creatures had given honour and glory, St. John saw the four and twenty elders round the throne fall down before the throne and worship, saying, "*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive* the glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy

pleasure they are and were created." Christians then, to whom God is a living God, and not only a living God but a loving Father, can never be content to forgo their birthright privilege of access to His presence in praise and prayer. To say that *laborare* is *orare*, that right action is the only worship God can require, will not be indeed, in their estimation, to make discord in the universe—nothing but sin makes discord; but it will be to take one's place in the lower chorus with the four beasts, the inarticulate creation, instead of with the four-and-twenty elders, who are the Church of Christ.

V

THE KINGDOM OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."—ST. MATT. vi. 33.

WHEN nations reach a certain stage in civilisation, and begin to reflect upon life, one of the first things to strike and puzzle them is the fact that success in life, in the shape of material prosperity, does not always follow righteousness. They have been taught by their wise men that life must be governed by certain principles, which are the laws of the God who made the world; so that the question cannot fail to present itself, Why in a world that God has made, and which

He still governs, should obedience to His laws fail to secure prosperity? The answer to this question is sometimes a somewhat bold assertion that the fact is otherwise. "I have been young, and now am old; yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread." But this is met by evidence on the other side. "Deliver my soul from the men of the world, whose portion is in this life. They have children at their desire, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. But as for me, I will behold thy presence in righteousness." It is too true, there is no denying the fact, that righteousness and prosperity are sometimes found on opposite sides.

This is the problem handled in that majestic drama the Book of Job, the key to which is supplied by the Prologue in heaven. The solution there offered is this: —that success would follow righteousness inevitably and as a matter of course in a

world governed by God's providence, were it not for the fact that righteousness becomes more difficult and therefore more praiseworthy when all prosperity is stripped away from it. When the Accuser has once said, "Doth Job serve God for naught?" it becomes necessary to test Job's faithfulness by leaving it bare of all external support.

Another of the great books of the world devoted to the same problem is the *Republic* of Plato, a book as characteristically Western in form as the Book of Job is Eastern. Plato asks, "What *is* this righteousness that we all are taught to honour, and what is the good of it?" Is it only a convention that we unite to press upon other people for our own advantage while we ourselves, as far as possible, avoid its requirements? That is an opinion always ready to suggest itself to the mind, when it is wishing to shake off the yoke of the moral law. You will hear it enunciated to-day on the modern

stage with all the gusto of a new discovery in ethics, though it was mercilessly exposed by the Greek dialectician more than two thousand years ago. Plato argued that because man was a rational creature and found the world intelligible, this implied that both alike were governed by a supreme purpose; for that a thing is rational, means that it has a purpose to serve; every man therefore serves some purpose. Hence the law of the world, which is righteousness, must be that each shall do his own business and fulfil his purpose in whatever society he finds himself; the better a man realises his position in all the societies of which he is a member, the wider his sympathies and at the same time the more concentrated upon his true interests, the more righteous he will be. Whether prosperity follows righteousness will depend upon whether the whole commonwealth is righteous, or only certain individuals in it; and, as you know, Plato

devotes a large part of his treatise to sketch the perfect state; in which righteousness shall prevail.

I have recalled to your minds this book of ancient wisdom because it has in common with Christianity these two points: that it says to each of us, Consider that your life has a purpose; consider what the purpose of your life is; and also because it contemplates an ordered state, a kingdom in which the purpose of life can be found and carried out. "Seek ye the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."

But the differences are no less striking than the similarities. Plato despaired of realising his ideal commonwealth in his native city, even though he attempted to embrace within it only a few favoured classes. And of these it was only the highest class of all who attained to any comprehension of what righteousness consisted in, the rest being absorbed in their special duties, which were

imposed upon them from above. Christ, though He knew more deeply what was in man, set up the gates of an actual kingdom, into which he summoned the men and women of His own day, and those not the cultivated and leisured classes only, but the poor, and the despised, and the outcast; and to all He gave that knowledge of the truth which made them free.

And then, again, while Christ would have accepted Plato's description of righteousness as "the doing of one's own business as being the will of God for each," He immeasurably deepened the content of what one's own duty must consist in. But, above all, He supplied what Plato could not supply, and what human nature so sorely lacks, a motive force in love to the King,—a king who so loved His people that He had done and would do incredible things for their sakes; a king no longer dimly surmised—guessed at—but seen and handled; known and loved as He

went about the streets, clothed in compassion, loving the most unworthy; a king who gave the freedom of an eternal city without money and without price.

There was to be a Christian kingdom, then, — an actual and visible order and polity—a city set on a hill. It was a city of God indeed, a kingdom of heaven, inasmuch as its King was divine; but at the same time a kingdom to be visibly established on this earth; and its one characteristic was to be that righteousness should flourish there. If that were so, the old prophecies must take effect: "The fruit of righteousness must be peace; the effect of righteousness, quietness and confidence for ever." When righteousness has been established, then all these other things, which are necessities of life, cannot fail to follow. In a community bound together by ties of mutual affection and duty, in which *no one* would defraud his neighbour, there could be no lack to any one of the means

of life. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added."

Into this kingdom, dear brethren, we have all been enrolled; we are by our baptism fellow-citizens of it. Are we obeying the elementary principle of its constitution, that of seeking "righteousness," *i.e. doing our duty for its own sake as being God's will for us?* For there is an alternative, that we may be seeking these other things, wealth, position, all the forms of material prosperity, and disregarding the true end of our calling; but to do that is to renounce our citizenship. Our King has laid this down too emphatically for it to be questioned. When the Twelve let their interest wander from the concerns of the kingdom to their own position in the kingdom, He said to them, "Except ye turn again, and become as little children, *i.e.* single-minded, you cannot enter the

kingdom, you are still outside it—even you apostles. For no man can serve the two masters, God and Mammon; you cannot have a single eye for your duty and at the same time be pursuing wealth and place."

That may seem a hard saying, but look if it is not the truth. Take any section you please through the body politic: take a man in his family life, or in his capacity as citizen, or in his profession, whatever it be—student, politician, lawyer, cleric; in each such section you disclose a life that *must* be either a life of duty or a life of self-seeking. The fact may not be obvious at every moment, because aims may apparently coincide and motives may be mixed. But crises are always coming when duty and self-seeking lead different ways, and then a decision must be taken. It may seem at first sight that the peculiarly English life, the life of commerce, must form an exception because it necessarily

sets before itself gain as an immediate object; and undoubtedly in this career the temptations to rank gain before righteousness are greater than in the learned professions; but still the opportunities of preferring righteousness before gain are correspondingly great. The manufacturer can set his face against shams, against slavish labour, against processes that injure life, against old-established but evil customs in his trade. He can regard himself not so much as an employer of hands as entrusted with the care of living souls, and make himself friends by what too often is "the mammon of unrighteousness."

The point then of our text is the paramountcy of the idea of righteousness. Seek righteousness first. If you seek the other things first — prosperity, happiness, fame, peace—you mistake the purpose of your life as a child of the God of righteousness, and in God's good providence you happily miss what

you seek. No truth of experience is more certain than this. Nations who care more for peace than justice, do not long gain even peace. To aim at happiness is ever to miss it. To value reputation overmuch is inevitably to desert the path of honour, and to lose in the long run even reputation.

But the second part of the text contains the promise that where righteousness is sought for its own sake, those other things shall be added. In the perfected divine kingdom, of which the first Christian society was a type, of which it is said "they were all of one heart and mind," it is patent that no one could be allowed to lack anything necessary, whether for body or soul; there would inevitably be mutual consideration, affection, honour. And even in our half-Christianised communities, it happens not seldom that these things come in the train of Duty. We recognise the fact in our familiar and somewhat cynical proverb, that "Honesty is the

best policy"; we note it again and again in conspicuous examples.

> Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
> The path of duty was the way to glory:
> He that walks it, only thirsting
> For the right, and learns to deaden
> Love of self, before his journey closes,
> He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
> Into glossy purples, which outredden
> All voluptuous garden-roses.

In conclusion, let me ask your attention for a moment more particularly to the first clause of our text, "Seek ye the kingdom of God." There is a sense in which the kingdom is already established; there is a sense in which it is still to seek, and in which we have still to pray "Thy kingdom come." For the kingdoms of this world are not yet become the kingdom of God and of His Christ; our own kingdom of England is still far from that ideal. But it is clear, that it needs only that each one of us should do his duty with a single motive

for God's glory, and with his conscience illuminated to know God's will, in order to bring in the reign of righteousness. That consummation we hasten whenever we decide for duty against love and self. Towards that consummation we are pledged to labour; and to no class in the Christian commonwealth is a more honourable share in this task allotted than to those who are directly occupied with the work of spreading justice; for justice is righteousness. It is a great thing for England that among much that is unsound, perhaps of growing unsoundness, in her commercial spirit, there should exist so potent a tradition of single-eyed devotion to the truth in this supreme work of administering justice. It was not always so in England. Students of our older literature know how much satire that contains against our lawyers—satire which has now entirely lost its savour. Take, for example, those familiar lines of Sir Walter Raleigh, written

after his condemnation on a charge of treason :—

> From hence to heaven's bribeless hall,
> Where no corrupted voices brawl ;
> No conscience molten into gold,
> No forged accuser bought or sold,
> No cause deferred, no vain-spent journey,
> For there Christ is the King's attorney.
> Be Thou my speaker, taintless pleader,
> Unblotted lawyer, true proceeder !
> Thou givest salvation even for alms,
> Not with a bribed lawyer's palms.

We may thank God that no condemned man, whether innocent or guilty, could now write so. Differing as our judges must naturally differ in mental gifts and habits, they are alike in the inflexibility with which they uphold the standard of righteousness. I may be allowed on this occasion to take note that the late occupant of the Chief Justiceship,[1] a distinguished and honoured

[1] Lord Russell of Killowen. The sermon was preached 26th October 1900.

member of this Society, who has passed away since last we were assembled here, while he was celebrated far beyond our island as an orator of genius, was even more celebrated here for the passion with which he pursued an ideal of justice. His own profession may, perhaps, cherish his memory for this or that splendid exhibition of forensic subtlety or daring, but I am persuaded that his name will live in the recollection of the people of England, as that of the judge who set himself the task of rebuking commercial dishonesty, and not least in high places. He sought righteousness, and by his jealousy in that high cause, we cannot doubt that he has helped forward the kingdom of God. He did not worship with us here, being bred up in a branch of the Christian Church with which we have many differences, believing it to have erred from the ancient faith; but may we not imagine such an one saying to us in the

words of St. James, "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."

> Ah, mighty God, with shame I speak't and grief,
> Ah that our greatest faults were in belief!

We have lost also in the past vacation a servant of this Society,[1] whose office among us was that chosen by our Lord as a symbol of the duty of watchfulness, which lies upon all. He had been a soldier and he had soldierly qualities, and it needed more than the ingrained obedience of his profession to remain at his painful post until he was relieved. The interval in man's reckoning between the two offices in the body politic is as wide as can be; but the concurrence of their discharge reminds us that the Master before whom they are now summoned, will take account, in the case of each and all of us, of the same one thing—

[1] Mr. Chapman, the head porter.

our dutifulness,—the earnestness of our pursuit after righteousness,—the faithfulness of our service to His kingdom. "And so he that received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have beside them gained five talents more. His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained other two talents besides them. His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

VI

THE LORD OF HOSTS

"Because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."—AMOS iv. 12.

As we read this Book of Amos now, its chapters make on us much the same impression as other passages of the Old Testament that rebuke the sins of men; they are fierce, full of passion, full of an imminent judgment; and as we read we acquiesce, because we acknowledge God to be a holy God, whose eyes cannot look upon evil; and yet, notwithstanding, the whole perhaps has only the most distant interest for us, like thunder heard remote.

But there was a time when these words

of Amos, which to us so readily commend themselves, were like foolishness and like blasphemy. To those who first heard them they seemed the ravings of a madman not to be listened to; or perhaps, it would be truer to say, like the ravings of an atheist, to be heard only with pity. The story belongs to the reign of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, when the kingdom of Israel was at the height of its glory and its frontier extended beyond the farthest point reached in the brightest days of Solomon.

Being so victorious and so prosperous the people had thankful hearts; the ancient sanctuaries of the land—Bethel, where their father Jacob had seen the vision of angels; Gilgal, where the shame of their uncircumcision had been rolled away; Dan, Mizpeh, Shechem—were crowded with worshippers, and the people even made pilgrimages right down to Beer-sheba in the south, where their father Abraham had dug a well. And

the guilds of the prophets which Samuel had founded, now so many years ago, rejoiced in this revival of religion, and bade the people expect the speedy advent of the "great day of the Lord," when all the nations would be gathered together from far to do homage to the nation of Jehovah.

The scene of this prophetic book is laid at Bethel, the most ancient and the most important of all the sanctuaries in Israel, on the occasion of a great festival. Amaziah, the priest in charge, has offered sacrifice for the people; and they are lying stretched at a solemn feast, singing songs with harp and tabor to God who gives His people corn and wine, and peace in their borders. And then, in the midst of these songs of thanksgiving, there is suddenly heard the shrill "discordant wail of the Eastern mourner."[1] "The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no

[1] It will be obvious how much this description of Amos and his time owes to Robertson Smith's *Prophets of Israel.*

more rise: she lies prostrate in her own land; there is none to lift her up." And they look; and in the midst of them stands a poor son of the desert, a herdman—"a beater of sycamore trees." Amaziah takes him to be some crazy prophet from Judah, who has been attracted by the festival, and has come to see if he can make a little money by startling the worshippers; and though, perhaps remembering another prophet who had appeared before at Bethel, he thinks it best to send the king word—because prophecies against the reigning house had sometimes a sudden and bloody way of fulfilling themselves—yet his main feeling seems to have been one of contemptuous pity for the poor intruder, reduced to prophesying for a piece of bread. "O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel."

Now what did Amos come to Bethel to say? What, in the time of this great prosperity, did he mean by denouncing the fall of the kingdom of Israel—"the virgin of Israel is fallen"? He saw two things: he saw, first, that the religion of the people had nothing to do with morality; that it was divorced from common honesty and clean living. Their commerce had made some of them rich, and that had only made them want to be richer. In the course of the hundred years' war between Israel and Damascus, the old peasant proprietors, each with his few acres, had vanished; and the land was held by a few wealthy holders, who let it at excessive rents, and when the tenants could not pay, lent money at excessive rates.

That was bad enough; but the lot of the poor became intolerable owing to the fact that there was no justice in the land. The judges were the priests; and the

penalty they inflicted for wrongdoing was not imprisonment, but a costly sacrifice or a money fine paid to the sanctuary; and when wrongs came to be regarded by the priests as a source of income, it is not hard to understand that there was no justice for the poor; and that a rich man might do anything he could pay for.

That explains why Amos is so fierce against the sacrifices at Bethel and Gilgal. It is not that they in themselves were anything but right, for they were the recognised mode of worship; it is because they were considered a sufficient atonement for every sort of dishonesty and fraud: as if a man amongst us were to think that the alms he gave at the Holy Communion made up for defrauding his fellows all the week; as if recognising the existence of God absolved a man from obeying Him. No, says Amos, but because you know God, because God has revealed Himself to you, therefore He

will visit upon you your iniquities. Because it is you who recognise that Jehovah is a judge, and come to His sanctuary and to His priests for your legal decisions, therefore on you shall His righteous judgment fall. Do you call Jehovah a judge, and do you think that in consequence He can be bribed with offerings? Who taught you such religion as that? Thus saith the Lord, "I hate, I despise your feast-days. I have no pleasure in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt-offerings, and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. But let justice run down like waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Seek ye *me*, saith the Lord; seek not Bethel or Beer-sheba; seek me."

This then was the first thing Amos saw, that although the land was full of religion, it was as full of iniquity; which, God being judge, could not go unpunished. In the

next place he saw that the punishment was near. On the horizon was a cloud that would spread itself and overwhelm them, the great conquering empire of the Assyrians. Amos nowhere mentions the Assyrians by name, but the people knew whom he meant. That made the treason of his prophecy, to think that the kingdom could be overthrown; and that also made the blasphemy of it, to prophesy that Jehovah's people could fall before the heathen. The people knew quite as well as Amos that their land was in danger from the Assyrians, for it was through the Assyrian weakening of Damascus, with whom they had fought for years, that they had been able to extend their borders; and now that Damascus had fallen, nothing stood between them and the Assyrians. But for all that, they had no fear: they put their trust in the God of their fathers. "Jehovah is his name." Slowly, very slowly, by the words of the prophets inter-

preting their repeated deliverances, especially through the work of Elijah and Elisha, the nation had come firmly to believe that they were the nation of Jehovah. "Them only had he known of all the families of the earth." By His stretched-out arm they had conquered the nations round about; the gods of the nations had fallen down before Jehovah. Who compared with Him was Baal or Moloch? Rimmon of Damascus had fallen; Chemosh had not saved Moab from His anger, nor Milcom the children of Ammon. There was none like unto the God of Jeshurun. "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by Jehovah, the shield of thy help, and the sword of thy excellency! The God of old is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." And now that Asshur, the god of the Assyrians, was leading on his nation against them, it would be seen once more which of the two was the Lord of

Hosts. And so they redoubled their sacrifices, and were confident of the issue.

And what had Amos to tell them about this impending struggle between Jehovah and Asshur? He told them that it was not Asshur but Jehovah who was leading the Assyrian army against them. We are so accustomed to the truth that God is the God of all flesh, that He has made of one blood all the nations of men, that we can hardly throw our imagination back to a time when this great fact was a new and startling revelation. But that is the truth Amos is labouring to impart to his countrymen; that although God had known them only of all the nations, yet it was He who guided the blind movements of all the wandering peoples of the earth. "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, *and* the Philistines from

Caphtor, *and* the Syrians from Kir?" I, not Dagon, not Rimmon, as you think and they think; I Jehovah, the Creator of the whole world.

"I am he that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth. Jehovah, the God of Hosts, is his name." Yes, the God of Hosts—as the Israelites were so proud to call Him; but of what hosts? Not of the hosts of Israel merely; they were but as dust in the balance.

And so, because it was not Asshur but Jehovah that was bringing up the Assyrian army against them, Amos bade the people

prepare to meet Him. That sentence, "Prepare to meet thy God," which has almost lost power to arrest us from being placarded in waiting-rooms and stencilled on the pavement of our streets, had a terrible significance as it first comes into Scripture. It meant, the God of your nation is bringing up an army against His own people; when you prepare yourselves for battle, it will be to fight against your own God, who is advancing against you. "Prepare to meet *thy* God, O Israel."

Such, roughly, is the substance of this prophecy of Amos; and I suggest to your thought his dramatic story to-day, because it will serve to bring home to our minds two or three practical lessons of which, in time of war, a nation sorely stands in need. It teaches us that there is a false confidence in God as being on our side, which does not command success. It reminds us that a nation may have to prepare to meet its

own God at the head of the opposing host. Some people may have been puzzled by the fact that both the opposing armies in the present terrible war are Christian men, who go into battle with prayers on their lips, and celebrate their victories with psalms. This ancient prophet will teach us, that God may hate our psalms and our prayers now, as He hated the Israelitish sacrifices long ago, if the heart that offers them cares nothing for justice, nothing for righteousness. And then, he will wipe out of our minds, if we will let him, the idea that any nation, however favoured by God, Israelite or Boer or Briton, can base upon that favour any claim upon God's help that the opposing nation has not equally. God is the God of all the world. We cannot claim Him as an ally in any sense that will not hold also of the other side. The confidence that comes from the idea that God has "chosen" any one nation for His own people in such a sense

that His credit is pledged to help them out of all their difficulties, is a false confidence that must end sooner or later in pitiful disappointment. This is false confidence, because it takes no account of the character of God, and of the aims, the necessarily moral aims, that God has in view. God chooses men and nations not for their merits, but to do certain work. The God whom the Bible reveals to us is a God whose interest is in men's character; a God who gave men commandments; a God of righteousness, whose cry to men is, "Are your minds set on righteousness, O ye congregation?" "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." If God be such a God as that, it is sheer folly to suppose that His help can be in any way tied to the fortunes of a particular people, even though He had originally elected them for a great purpose; even though He still keeps that purpose in view. On the contrary, it

has often been seen that, both for men and nations, the valley of humiliation has been the door of hope: that defeat and shame have saved them, and given them once more a desire to carry out the true purpose of their election.

(2.) But those who contend most strenuously against reducing God to the level of a partisan, are sometimes tempted to fall into as great an error by practically denying that God can be interested in the fortunes of any nation at all. They have not taken the step Amos would have them take, from worshipping a national God, to worshipping a God of righteousness, whose one care is that of righteousness, and who has pledged Himself to punish sin, as in individuals, so also in nations. The God they have come to believe in is very little more than an abstraction, a formula; they believe in righteousness, rather than in the God of righteousness, and so they have a horror of appeals to Him

to aid this cause or that, as though to pray was to bring human passions into an air too serene for such violence. It troubles them that we should pray for victory; we seem to be repeating the error of the Israelites, in invoking a merely tutelary deity. But the same argument would put a stop to our prayers for every social object, for all the National Institutions for which your prayers are bidden before every sermon here. And if these things are too concrete for the divine interest and care, how can we dare to pray for merely individual blessings? Such an abstract deity as this would be, is not the Christian God. Our final authority for God's nature is the picture He gave us of Himself in the only-begotten Son. "He that hath seen me," said Christ, "hath seen the Father." If so, we have but to ask, whether the interest of our Lord in His own generation, in the individuals of it, and in the whole nation collectively, was less than that of

the people of His day? Was it not far greater?

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!"

If a nation then may be destroyed by God as a punishment for unrighteousness, or gathered closer into the protection of the Almighty arms, may we not deprecate that destruction and entreat this protection? and if we do so, must we not in the same breath ask for the forgiveness of our sins? To humble ourselves as a nation before God in penitence is not, as some would represent it, a bribe to the Almighty; if it were, it would be a happy bribery, *felix culpa*, a bribery that we could be content to see spreading far and wide. But did any son of man ever say to God: "I will cleanse my heart, if you will give me victory"! He

has said sometimes, "I will sacrifice my dearest," but could he say "I will cleanse my heart," on such and such terms? Do not believe it. Rather the truth is, that no one can pray honestly and intelligently to God for anything, without at the same time praying for the forgiveness of his sins. To come into God's presence at all, is to be overcome with the prophet's sense of shame—"Woe is me! for I am a man of unclean lips"; and therefore even to the petition for daily bread must always be annexed "Forgive us our trespasses." It is often by being in trouble that we learn to pray: we cannot but pray for our friends in danger, for our country in perplexity; and as we kneel in church, or by our bedside, the thought comes home to our hearts, "God is of purer eyes than to behold evil. I am praying to Him for victory; for my child's life; for my brother's or husband's life; am I praying from a clean heart? If I incline

unto wickedness in my heart, the Lord cannot hear me."

Dear brethren, the wisdom of our forefathers set apart these days of Lent for earnest self-examination. When God's special judgments are in the world, there is a special call for such examination. May God grant us all the courage to face ourselves, who are ever our own worst enemies; to face ourselves, and learn the truth; may He grant us the courage to meet Him as a friend, that we may not have to meet Him as a foe; and may He grant us grace to amend our lives according to His holy word.

VII

RETALIATION IN GOD AND MAN

"*Love ye your enemies*, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you."—ST. LUKE vi. 35-38.

IT has often been pointed out how full our Lord's teaching is of maxims which, because they express pointedly different sides of a truth, appear to conflict with one another. A great divine, once Preacher to this Society, Dr. Donne, whose subtle mind delighted in paradox, compared such antithetical truths to the rivers of Paradise, which from the same fount flowed in oppo-

site directions—a useful comparison if it encourage us to trace all such apparent contradictions back to their source. Let me then this morning first invite your attention to the form of this passage, which presents to us two apparently conflicting attributes of God, insisted upon by Christ as the ground and the sanction of the new law of love.

In the first of the verses I read for the text, we are commanded to surrender our old habit of retaliating upon our injurers, because we are now the adopted children of God, to whose nature such retaliation is entirely foreign: "He is kind to the unthankful and the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." But in the verses that follow, we seem to be commanded to have mercy, in order to escape at the hands of God a measure of retaliation: "Judge not." Why? because your heavenly Father does not judge? No, but lest you be judged. At

the first glance it would almost look as if these verses must belong to the old dispensation, and have thrust themselves in here, like the badly obliterated writing of a palimpsest. For if this is not retaliation that is threatened, what is it? "With the same measure that ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." And yet at the same time we recognise the distinctively Christian note in the commandments themselves: "Judge not—condemn not—forgive—give." What shall we say then? May we formulate from the 37th verse the law of retaliation as a law of the divine dealing with men, while from the 35th we must insist that it is altogether abhorrent to His nature?

The most usual method of reconciling supposed antagonisms among the divine attributes is to introduce a distinction of time; and, as in this case, to say: "God is kind to the unthankful and the evil to-day and to-morrow, if there be a morrow, and

all days up to the day of judgment; but then the other side of the Godhead comes into activity: the days of mercy are past; it is now the turn of justice; and justice, if it be strictly construed, what is it but retaliation?—blessing for blessing, cursing for cursing, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."

But however useful such a distinction may be for purposes of practical homiletics, we know that the God whom our Lord Jesus Christ revealed to us is no Roman Janus with two faces; we know that His mercy and His justice, even if separable in thought, cannot thus be divorced from each other; we know that they are but the twin rays into which our human intellect splits up the pure white glow of His love. And so we are prohibited from glorifying retaliation under the name of strict justice, if by that term we mean justice without love. For God is Love, and in the divine

nature justice and love are inseparable, yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

It may be said, however, "What you are contending against is after all only the human associations of a word. What is there undivine in retaliation? It is revenge, not retaliation, that is forbidden to Christians, and in retaliation proper there is no tincture of revenge. If a man can purge his heart of malice and spite and all personal sense of gratification, surely he may legitimately proceed to exact the eye or the tooth—'the court awards it, and the law doth give it.' Retaliation, in that case, is nothing but retribution." To which the Christian must reply: "Yes; retaliation purged of all spite and malice is simply retribution; but then the very distinction of the Christian method is that it is an advance upon retribution, which was the justice of the Old Testament. The Old Testament had got as far as that; the Old Testament did not permit feelings

of revenge, it suppressed them; it allowed nothing that was not nominated in the bond, neither more nor less than the just pound; it did not permit the scale to turn even in the estimation of a hair. But the teaching of Christ knows nothing of the scales of justice. Christ taught that evil was best met, not by retribution, but by active benevolence; His disciples were not to resist evil, but to overcome it with good; they were to meet cursing with blessing, persecution with patience. And the justification offered them of such an extraordinary, such an extravagant, policy was, that it was indeed supernatural, superhuman, being the method of God, who makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends His rain on the just and on the unjust. It does not appear, then, that we gain anything by simply substituting retribution, the word, or the idea, for retaliation: they are equally on a lower level than the doctrine of Christ.

But I can conceive an apologist saying, "Allowing to the full that God is indeed love, and all love, still in the hands of an all-wise and all-loving Father, retaliation might often be found to be the kindest instrument of discipline. Our Father in heaven, we must believe, cares for us, and whatever pains or pleasures He sends will be for our highest good; and not seldom it may happen that our eyes are best opened to the significance of our conduct to others by being compelled ourselves to suffer the like; just as a strong unimaginative schoolboy, who is disposed to be a bully, may be best brought to see the brutality of his conduct by suffering what he has inflicted." To such a view we should probably all assent; such a disciplinary use retaliation seems certainly to have, and in no way would such a use conflict with the great law of love. "For what son is he whom his father chasteneth not?" I would even

venture to go farther, and put it to my brethren whether they cannot, each of them, lay their finger on some experience of their lives, which they can themselves recognise as being, in the inscrutable workings of God's providence, the returning to them of the same measure they have meted out to others. They have judged hastily, and lo, they find themselves hastily judged; they who lightly condemned, learn what it is to suffer an unmerited or disproportionate condemnation; or they have not forgiven, and they find themselves shut out from affection.

But allowable as such an interpretation seems to be, it does not bring us to the root of the difficulty, for it will not apply to some other passages which are cast in the same mould. There is, for example, in all the Synoptic gospels a passage where the retaliatory cast of the sentence is even more striking than in our text: "Whosoever

shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God."

There does not seem here to be any question of discipline. The denier is denied, not for a season, or to bring him to a better mind, but absolutely. I would suggest, therefore, that the difficulty of all such passages arises in the main from the use of the human future tense, and that what we take to be a retaliatory act of the divine will is really an inevitable consequence of our own actions. If, for instance, in these places that I have quoted, remembering that to God there is no before and after, we could substitute the present tense for the future, and say: "He that denieth me before men *is* denied before the angels of God," "Judge not, and ye *are* not judged," would not such a rendering help us to grasp the eternal inevitableness

of the judgment, and banish altogether the suggestion of caprice? It would bring these passages into line with that great text in St. John: "He that believeth on me *cometh* not into condemnation, but is passed from death to life." And such a reading would help us to realise what is undoubtedly the truth, that God's actions of forgiving and judging are simultaneous with our actions; we are forgiven or judged *ipso facto*; by our actions we take, as it were, a certain colour in the divine sight; we exhibit, or we do not exhibit, the spirit of Christ, and by the presence or absence of that spirit we stand forgiven or judged.

Let us now pass on from the form of the text to its substance, and ask in what sense "judging" is forbidden? It is manifest from other passages of Scripture that both the Christian Church and the Christian State were not left without authority over their members, so that there is no re-

ference to Bishops and Magistrates. It is further manifest that the two pairs of terms in the text are antithetical, and represent two opposite spirits, the spirit which "judges" and "condemns" being contrasted with one that "forgives" and "gives," as the typical anti-Christian spirit with the spirit of Christ. It is always safer to lay stress on the spirit from which actions proceed, than on definite actions themselves, since it is the temper they proceed from which gives them their quality. We proceed therefore to ask, What is the temper condemned by our Lord in His commandment "Judge not"? It is a happy thing for England, and should be a subject for gratitude, that our word "to judge" bears so good a sense as it does; and that we have really no word that, without explanation, can stand in this place as the opposite of "give" and "forgive." What the context requires is a word

to express the action of a selfish or an implacable disposition; of a temper that holds itself aloof in disdain, or, at least, in distrust, without making an attempt to understand, far less to pity or sympathise;—the reverse of such a character as that sketched for us by St. Paul in his praise of Charity; the reverse of that character which we see moving through the pages of the Gospels, giving Himself to all who asked, and forgiving sins, the Son of the Father who is kind to the unthankful and the evil.

Perhaps we get as near to it as we can by simply keeping the Greek word "critical," which can, alas! be used not only of that patient spirit which weighs events in all their circumstances, and strives to estimate characters as they really are, but also of a spirit which takes no such pains to be just, which never makes allowances, which takes credit for interpreting everything for the worse as "knowing the world," which de-

tects faults, and is blind to virtues, because faults alone are of interest to it.

But why is this critical, censorious spirit so disastrous that it is singled out thus for condemnation as the very spirit of Anti-Christ? There are several reasons, and the first plainly is, because it has a form of godliness. It professes to be divine, and is therefore a libel upon the character of God. Let us suppose a crime has been committed, and committed by our own kin or acquaintance;—do we regard them in the same hard spirit as if they were strangers? No; because we know more about them than the mere action taken by itself: we know their character, and whether it was through sudden passion or through infirmity of will that they were betrayed into what is so shocking. We know them, that is one thing; and we love them, that is another; and so, though we do not extenuate their fault, but may

acquiesce in their sentence, we do not cease to love them, and we do not lose hope of their spiritual recovery. The reason why we can, all of us, trust so securely in God's mercy is because He knows us, and because He loves us;—not only knows whereof we are made, and remembers that we are but dust, but knows how long we struggled before we were worsted; knows that although there has been this or that backwater in our lives, yet the main current has set steadily in the channel of duty. "He knows about it all. He knows, He knows," —knows and loves—that is the Christian consolation. And this spirit of knowledge and love, which we can each have of our immediate circle, which God has of us all, is the temper we are to strive after in order to be the children of our Father. We are to aim at penetrating below the outward appearance—even of a crime. After the world has passed judgment, and we as

members of the world, have subscribed to it; and when law has been avenged, and society has purged out the offending leaven, then the duty of a Christian, if circumstances bring him into touch with the crime, only begins; his duty is to understand, and pity, and keep open the gates of the divine mercy. And in lesser things, it is the charitable judgment, the judgment of knowledge or imagination, and the judgment of sympathy, that are demanded of Christians. It was a sad fall, we say; yes, and not the first, no—and yet

> Haply yon wretch, so famous for his falls,
> Got them beneath the devil-defended walls
> Of some high virtue he had vow'd to win;
> And that which you and I
> Call his besetting sin
> Is but the fume of his peculiar fire
> Of inmost contrary desire,
> And means wild willingness for her to die,
> Dash'd with despondence of her favour sweet;
> He, fiercer fighting in his worst defeat
> Than I or you
> Did ever fight in our best victory.

But some one may say, so far we agree; we are prepared to allow that bad people may not be so bad as they seem; we can believe that God can detect some sort of goodness in what to us looks utterly evil; we do not forget the publicans and sinners; but neither do we forget the Pharisees, and, as Christ judged them, may we not follow His example and be censorious about hypocrites? The answer, of course, is: Undoubtedly we may when we have Christ's penetration into motives. The motive for some conspicuous action may be, as we think, ambition, may be ostentation, but it may not; it may even be benevolence. It is astonishing how many contemptuous and unchristian verdicts we have to revise when we come to read the biographies of men about whom we had thought hardly and spoken hardly. Perhaps we had judged them to be merely worldly, and we find their piety puts our own to the blush. The

first and great reason, then, why the censorious temper is disastrous, is because it is so apt to plume itself on being divine, whereas too often it lacks the divine qualities of knowledge and love.

It is disastrous also from its effects upon both subject and object; it curses "him that gives and him that takes." It is disastrous to those who surrender themselves to it, because it corrupts their faith in human nature. To be always looking for faults is to cease to be able to see anything else; so that one comes in time to the temper of Shakespeare's Iago, who was "nothing if not critical," and at last to the temper of Satan, who said, "Doth Job serve God for naught?" Further, such a habit of outside scrutiny indisposes us to look within. The acquired keenness which can detect even a mote in our brother's eye is blind to the beam in our own; and from being merely critical we become hypocritical.

And as to its object. There too it is ruinous; for our judgments have often a formative power, and make people what we think them. If you think a man a fool, ten to one every time you see him he will give you still more cause to think so, because no one can do himself justice in an atmosphere that is hostilely critical. The critical spirit is like an east wind, which makes people shrivel up into themselves. ~~And though I do not say if you~~ think a man wicked you will make him wicked, it is, at least, true to say, that if you think him wicked you tend to keep ~~him wicked.~~ ~~He~~ they may adopt your estimate, and think it hopeless to try at becoming better.

But contrast with such a blighting influence the Christian virtue of forgiveness. It is a specially Christian virtue, because its exercise depends upon the acknowledgment of the great Christian facts. Any one

who realises at all keenly what the sin of the human heart is for which Christ suffered, which God forgave, will draw not so very sharp a line between the forgiveness he has himself needed and the forgiveness he must hold out to others. If God for Christ's sake has forgiven you, if the Father has looked in you at the spirit of His Son struggling, notwithstanding hindrance and imperfection, to work itself into your life, and for the sake of that has forgiven you, why should you not look for the same gleams of goodness in your fellow-servant? Not to do so is to misunderstand the reason for which you yourself are forgiven; it is to imagine that your own righteousness has secured your pardon, and the moment a man comes to think that, it is a proof that the Holy Spirit has left him, and so the forgiveness of God has withdrawn itself. It must be so; the unmerciful servant cannot receive

mercy, because only the spirit of Christ in us allows God to pardon, and if we quench that spirit, there is nothing on which God's eye can look. We are necessarily outcasts from His presence.

Readiness, then, to think well of people, readiness to forgive, a capacity for seeing their good side, faith in the high qualities of our redeemed nature, its power of recovery, its power of growth — these are signs in us of the spirit of Christ, for Christ's great way of lifting human nature was by encouraging all that was best and noblest in it. These then, are signs of the presence of Christ's spirit; and meting out to others this measure, we cannot fail to secure God's blessing for ourselves. "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven"; forgive not, and ye shall not be forgiven; shall not, because ye cannot—since being forgiven and forgiving others depend alike upon the presence of Christ. They are

two sides, active and passive, of the same great fact of Redemption.

Finally, the text contrasts the two tempers of the world and the Church, of Christ and anti-Christ, by the word *give*. "Give, and it shall be given unto you." The Christian temper is that which gives, not that which takes; that which gives out of itself, not that which sits and takes toll. We must give, then; but what must we give? Give yourself—the only gift worth giving—your time, your interest, your thought, your appreciation, your alms, your kind word. Give; and what you give is laid up as treasure in heaven: the angels have charge of it, and it shall be repaid sevenfold into your bosom. And not only in heaven: God's providence works here as well as there. Your open heart will open the hearts that it touches; your warmth will inspire warmth. If you complain of loneliness, of want of sympathy,

of the selfishness of the world, ask yourself if you yourself are giving, or only waiting to receive. If the latter, the children of the world, with their *do ut des*, are wiser than you. The humble sower who goes forth bearing good seed in hope of his harvest, is wiser than you. Begin at the beginning —begin with *date* and God will attend to the *dabitur;* see to the sowing and leave the increase to God. "It shall be given you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they—they whose charge it is—give into your bosom."

VIII

THE THREE-FOLD AWAKENING

"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."—EPH. v. 14.

THE words here quoted by St. Paul are a fragment from a primitive Christian hymn —one of the few relics we have in Scripture itself of the earliest Church services. The mission of the Church was to a world asleep, a world dead in trespasses and sins. But it is significant that the hymn should have been sung in the Christian congregation, —sung by the Church to itself when the world was shut out. The fact makes us call to mind that our Lord solemnly warned His Church to watch, "lest, coming suddenly,

he find you sleeping"; and that on another occasion He employed the figure of sleeping virgins to express a more than probable state of the Church while He tarried. In His letter by the Apostle St. John to the Church at Sardis, He charges it in plain terms with sleeping the sleep of death: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." What a ghastly picture! A company of Christians meeting for their solemn services, going through all the prescribed ritual of the Church, prayers, hymns, Eucharist, giving each other the kiss of peace, and all the time but "magnetic mockeries," with no living energy prompting those external actions! A ghastly picture indeed, and all the more ghastly because it is so paradoxical. For how does the Church differ from the world? The Church at the beginning was but the world awakened from its sleep of death, so that its eyes were opened to the glory of God; and it leapt

up, rejoicing that the evil dreams were past, and the day come in which to work the works of light. If then the Church, as the day goes on, fall into a sleep through the weight of custom upon its eyelids—"doze, doze as good as die,"—how does such a Church, except in divine possibilities, differ from the world? Every Church has its own besetting perils. Where, as here in England, the State adopts the Church, patronises and protects it, there is always a grave danger that the Church may rest content with the standard of morality that the nation has so far adopted into its laws—that it may become timid of speaking its whole mind, fearful of being righteous overmuch, instead of being zealous to fulfil its task as the "light of the world," the illuminator and instructor of the world's conscience, raising it to higher and higher conduct till the Sermon on the Mount becomes the familiar text-book of every day. Happily

in these last days conventional Christianity has become less fashionable; and though some of the immediate results of this change cannot but be deplored—such as the gross animalism that is shamelessly paraded by some of the baser sort of novelists,—yet the gain is immensely greater, because there is once more a chance of making clearly visible the deep and vital distinction between the Church and the World. It becomes us, therefore, who are Christians, now more than ever, not for our own sakes only but for the sake of the world to which we minister, to make our own calling and election sure, to live up to the full light of our knowledge, to exhibit unmistakably the true marks of a Church, and, as in the first days, endeavour to win the allegiance of men, not by complying with their weaknesses, and not by imposing upon them a shibboleth, but by arousing their conscience as we shed upon it the light of Christ.

To do that, our first concern must be with ourselves. "Awake thou that sleepest!" How shall we be sure that we ourselves are awake?

The only way to be sure that we are awake is to be glad that we are awake, to glory in the light of Jesus Christ, the risen Sun of Righteousness; to bathe ourselves in the warmth of His beams, and go to our daily work in the light of His splendid shining. Does the character of Jesus of Nazareth impress you as the most beautiful you have ever known? Does it win your love and attract your desire? Can you join in heartily with His blessings, being thoroughly persuaded that the "blessed" people are indeed the pure and the patient and the merciful and the peacemakers? For the rousing from sleep must begin for men still, as it began for the first disciples, in a natural drawing of heart to heart, deepening from the first amazed delight—"Never man spake like this man!"—to

the confession wrung from the experience of faith,—"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life!"

The first sign, therefore, of a waking life is to have our desire "lift upward." Men are always desiring; the soul's fire is always burning with many-coloured flames, and it is in the furnace of our desires that our character has to be moulded. Of what sort, then, are our predominant desires? Are they the steady flames of joy in all things honest and pure and lovely and of good report? Are they the desires mingled of faith and hope for God's will to be done in earth, as it is done in heaven; or, are our masterful desires all for our own prosperity, and those which found expression to-day in the Church's prayers merely lambent flames playing over the soul's surface, now kindled perhaps, to remorse or pity, and soaring aloft in a momentary leap of generosity and good resolve, then dying away? Or, still worse,

does there mingle with them a flame of the dark fire, whose issue, if it should come to an issue by yielded opportunity, is that sin of uncleanness or that sin of covetousness which banish from Christ's kingdom? What were the desires that filled your heart as you entered church this morning? Were not those your true prayers? What is it you most care for when your thoughts are most at liberty? About what shrine do they instinctively gather? Is it wealth that most attracts you, or is it power, or is it reputation, or is it simply pleasure? Or is it none of these things, but the beauty of goodness? If it be, thank God that you are awake!

The first sign of the awakened life is right desire, the second is an energetic will upholding it. When we are fully awake, the desire carries the will along with it into successful action. But it is possible to go on living in a half-roused state, no longer indeed in apathetic slumber, or in the throes

of nightmare, sweating with hot passion after some valueless trifle, "some trick not worth an egg," but in the borderland of dreams; now awake, seeing the sun in the heavens, and now falling back into sleep; aware of a beautiful end before us, and desiring it, and yet continually distracted by competing desires, and so making no more actual impression on events than a wisp on the stream, or a smoke in the air. We must recognise with some shame, that to desire is not to will, that to admire is not necessarily to do. What else is the meaning of that grim proverb about the pavement of Hell!

A man's desires are like the courtiers of a king. Some are wise counsellors, some are favourites, and we know that too often the favourites carry the day by giving the pleasanter advice. But behind the courtiers there is the king, and it is the king, and the king only, who is to blame, if he be led astray—the king, and not his

counsellors. It is King Rehoboam who must bear the blame, and suffer the loss of the disruption of Israel, not the young men, his companions. It is King Richard Plantagenet,[1] not his foolish advisers, who must bear the scorn and grief of failure and discrowning. So it is with each of us. We are kings by the grace of God over our desires. It is idle to blame our idle desires. The will, which is our real manhood, is king; and if the will is weak, it is we who must suffer. God has given us, out of that infinite will by which the worlds first came into being and now consist, our own separate individual wills; so that to say "I will do this" is to share in the Creator's prerogative—and surely, also, to taste His joy. But then, by its very nature, by its very divinity, the will is free. It is free, therefore, to second any desire—the desires

[1] Suggested by his picture in Westminster Abbey, where this sermon was first preached, March 17, 1895.

that God must loathe, no less than those He must approve. So that this gift of free will, which is the crowning gift of all creation, can be used to destroy creation, as the children of Adam have found to their shame and cost.

But Christ came—the second Adam—to restore what had been destroyed, by willing to live a human life in accordance with the will of God; and having accomplished His purpose, He became a new fount of life for the race. The attraction, therefore, to Christ, the desire of the beauty of that God-willed life, can be sustained from the pressure of the base desires, by the infusion of new strength into the depraved and palsied will from the perfected will of Christ. The power of desire by itself will not avail; it did not save even Peter from denial, though never was desire so strong and whole-hearted as his. Even if there were no hereditary impulses warring in our

members, and distracting us from the pursuit of the good, our will, which came out from God, would need ever to be renewed by Him; for, though individual, our will is not independent; it needs always to be kept in touch with the quickening Spirit; else, as in a branch dismembered from a vine, as in a lamp with no reserve of oil, the sap withers, the heat dies down. But the Father of our spirits has not left us to ourselves. From birth to death in His Church he has begirt us with the means of grace. Our wills may ever seek Him and find Him in the communion of prayer; and never with such assurance as in that greatest prayer of all, which carries with it its own response; that prayer which, from its excellency, we call the Holy Communion; in which we lift up our feeble wills in and through the perfect will of Christ, and find that virtue has come out of Him in proportion to our need.

A right desire, then, and a will ever

renewed in vigour—these are signs of being awake in the day of Christ. And there is a third, wise judgment. By wise judgment is meant not philosophical depth, or scientific ingenuity, although Christ has a claim upon our intellectual powers as much as upon any others; what is meant is, that "spirit of counsel" which is allied to "ghostly strength," and which comes from sympathetic insight, whether into the character of Christ or into the character of men, unprejudiced by considerations of personal profit or personal comfort.

When Christian descended the difficult hill from the House Beautiful to the Valley of Humiliation, he was accompanied by Piety and Charity, and also by Discretion and Prudence; and "though he went very warily," says Bunyan, "yet he caught a slip or two." May we interpret the allegory of that difficult descent from Sunday's worship to Monday's business? How difficult we

find it to put into practice the laws of the spiritual kingdom; the law of forgiveness, for example,—to know when to resent, and when to turn the cheek. In the Christian religion there is double need for sound judgment, because our very principles have in many cases to be deduced from the example of a life, lived at a definite point of time and place; and in other cases where we have clear principles laid down in Scripture for our guidance, even they require translating into precepts adapted to the present age. Let me illustrate the defect of judgment in both processes by a conspicuous instance.

(1.) One of the most single-hearted followers of Christ as he knew Him, was John Newton, the writer of the well-known hymn, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear"; and yet he tells us himself that he never enjoyed more intimate communion with the Master than

on his voyages in command of a slave ship from Liverpool to New Guinea. Our first impulse is to say the man must have been a hypocrite; but we should be wrong. His judgment was at fault, not his conscience. His judgment was not awake to its work, and so his conscience was not instructed. The imitation of Christ, as he knew Christ, did not forbid slavery, and therefore did not preclude his being captain of a slave ship, any more than it hindered his employers from amassing fortunes out of the price of blood.

(2.) In the next place, we may take an example where an admittedly Christian principle was carried out in practice, on a conspicuous scale, without the discretion necessary to safeguard it; and we may choose it, like the other, from the eighteenth century. No man had so much influence on the religious life of his generation as William Law. His practical treatises,

especially the *Serious Call*, were potent forces in the development of such various religious leaders as the two Wesleys, Henry Venn the Evangelical, and the saintly Bishop Wilson, not to speak of laymen like Samuel Johnson. His character was remarkable for consistency, and he determined to live a life which, as near as human infirmity allowed, should carry out his ideal. He had felt with special keenness that our Lord's words, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom," must be taken account of by professing Christians; that they could not, at any rate, be pressed into a condonation of the race for wealth. And so when circumstances (which I need not detail) gave him the control of £3000 a year, he reserved a tithe for his household expenses, and spent the rest in charity. But his method had nothing of the wisdom of the serpent, and so nothing of the harmlessness of the dove. His method was to

administer it in person in his house-yard to all comers who seemed, after a momentary investigation, to need it. Can we wonder that the parishioners laid a complaint before the magistrate, that their village was besieged by the ne'er-do-wells of the whole county?

We sigh or smile over the want of wisdom shown by such saints as Law and Newton; but when we turn from the problems of their day to those of our own, can we be sure that we are not as much at fault? Dare we say that our principles are all consistently deduced from Christ's example, and all carried out prudently into practice? Is there no modern slavery in our industrial organisations; no sweet communion on the upper deck oblivious of what may be going on below in the hold? And is there still no squandering of alms upon unworthy objects, to the neglect of great and crying needs? How many questions there are, both as to practice and as to

principle, upon which we need an illuminating judgment! What is luxury? Am I living in luxury? What is meant, for Christian men and women to-day, by keeping the Sabbath holy? How shall the cause of temperance, the cause of purity, be most successfully taken in hand? It is something even to ask such questions; for the conscience that has asked a question cannot rest content until it has found some answer. We sigh when we think of the days when all such problems of daily life could be referred to the wisdom of the Great Apostle. How patiently he laid down principles! how lucidly he showed their application! He knew the weakness of his flock, and bade them be followers of him, even as he was of Christ; translating the divine life into a shape in which they could imitate it.

We have no new Paul; but the Church, God be thanked, is not to-day without wise

leaders who give their strength to ponder these problems; and it behoves us to weigh well the advice they give us, and so help our own judgment to instruct our conscience. For not until our minds are well awake, not until an earnest desire to follow Christ has laid strong hold of our will, and our will is guided by that spiritual wisdom whose price is indeed beyond rubies, can we call in any certain voice to the people of England. But when we can so call, the response will be wonderful.

England, awake, awake, awake!
Jerusalem, thy sister, calls;
Why wilt thou sleep the sleep of death,
And close her from thy ancient walls?

Thy hills and vales once felt her feet
Gently upon their bosoms move;
Thy gates beheld sweet Zion's ways,
Then was a time of joy and love.

And now the time returns again;
Our souls exult, and London's towers
Receive the Lamb of God to dwell
In England's green and pleasant bowers.

IX

THE ROCK OF LOVE

"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church."—ST. MATTHEW xvi. 17, 18.

"THOU art Peter." Our Lord at the admission of Simon into the little band of disciples had given him the name of Peter, the rock, just as he called the sons of Zebedee Boanerges, or as we might say, thunder and lightning. In all societies of young men such extra names are given, and it helps us to realise across the mist of centuries, and despite the fogs of convention, how real and human and collegiate the life in the little community must have

been. The name Boanerges has light thrown upon it by the demand of James and John to call down fire from heaven upon the disobliging Samaritan village; the name of Peter does not so readily explain itself. We should ourselves probably describe as a rock a man of hard and stern nature, upon whom it was difficult to make an impression; such a prophet, for example, as John the Baptist, impenetrable alike to the threats of tyranny or the tender solicitations of friendship and love. But what do we find in this rock Simon? We find ~~a man~~ made up of affections and sympathies; one who acts, not upon reasoned conviction but upon impulse, wearing his heart, we might almost say, upon his sleeve; a man, too, of extraordinary sensitiveness to outside impressions, feeling the feelings that move his society and sympathising with them. The stories told of him in the gospels show the real man to us in a vivid light. They show

the quick changes of impulse as he sees a thing from a fresh point of view, the immediate response to the stimulus of a new idea. Thus at that memorable last Passover, when our Saviour girded Himself and washed His disciples' feet: Peter's first impulse was to refuse, "Thou shalt never wash my feet," and then as a possible meaning of the act struck him, "Not my feet only but also my hands and my head." And the same characteristics appear in the Acts of the Apostles. We see the enthusiasm with which he welcomes the new idea that Christ is for the Gentiles as much as for the Jews; he acts at once upon the hint of the vision; and when Cornelius has told his story, exclaims: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." Could St. Paul himself have put the new truth with greater clearness and emphasis? And

consistently with this we find him welcoming the work of St. Paul and Barnabas, giving them the right hand of fellowship, visiting them at Antioch, and associating himself with the Gentile Church; a much harder task we may remember for a peasant, with all his inherited and unreasoned prejudices, than for a trained thinker like St. Paul. And then a Jewish deputation came down to Antioch, and Peter seems to have sympathised with them as keenly as with the Gentiles; and realising their invincible disgust at eating with Gentiles, he dined with them apart; thereby incurring the rebuke of the other apostle, who saw a principle at stake. But such conduct as this of St. Peter, although we can easily understand, and may perhaps condone it, and must remember that the story is not told from his point of view, is not the conduct of the sort of character we should compare to a rock. Our Lord, we need not say, was under no delusion as to

St. Peter's real character; we can see that from the passage at the end of the Gospel, when after his denial he is reinstated in his apostleship. Our Lord's words to him were, "Simon son of Jonah, *lovest* thou me more than these?" as though love had always been recognised as his dominant characteristic, and as though by calling him only Simon, He said, "art thou still Peter?" "may I still as before rely, stake everything, build my hope, upon thy *love?*" For in truth, it was the love of Christ that was the basis of St. Peter's religious faith. It was that which kept him close to his Master even in the high priest's palace. He denied Him, but he did not desert Him; he might at each challenge have departed, but he did not; he could not bear to lose the sight of what best upon earth he loved. Love, then, admiring love, deepened into worship, was the solid and infrangible element of his faith. That is what remained sure and stedfast through

all his mistakes and misunderstandings, failures and denials; and, by prompting his confession of faith, established him as the first foundation-stone of the everlasting Church.

Let us ponder, for a moment, this Christian paradox that it is love which is the rock of Christian character. Our natural idea, of course, is that a man is most himself when he is most self-centred; when he goes out of himself least, when instead of giving himself to others he sits in his own heart, taking toll and tithe. But the Christian idea is the very opposite of this. The Christian ideal of life and character rests upon the revelation that God is in His own nature *love*. If that is so, it follows that love and not selfishness must be the true character for men.

If a man chooses to question this, I do not see how it can be proved to him. But those who are willing to accept the Christian ideal, find that it bears itself witness by the

success of their lives. It justifies itself in many ways. For example, as our text explains, love is the only sure guide to the character of others. It was St. Peter's passionate love for our Lord that inspired him with the insight into His true nature; and our Lord recognises this love as an inspiration from the God of love, bringing interpretative power, "Blessed art thou, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." The same thing is true to-day. Love, because it is an inspiration from God, has far truer insight into the character of men than hate or contempt.

And generally we may note that if man is what he is by virtue of the bonds which bind him to others, love must necessarily be the power by which he can best realise his nature and fulfil his duties. If you ask yourself "What am I?" the answer you must give is

to name the societies of which you are a member, widening out from your own family to the human race. And if man is thus social, if his life consists of action and reaction upon other men in various societies, the principle of sympathy which alone can bind men together must be a root principle of his nature, and one upon which it behoves him to act. "Love worketh *no* ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

But in thus celebrating love as the groundwork of Christian character because it is the groundwork of ideal humanity, we must be careful not to separate it from admiration and trust. "We live," says the poet, "by admiration, hope, and love." It is with a shock that we pass from the first expression of St. Peter's love in this chapter to the second; for the first is greeted as inspired by God, and the second as inspired by Satan. Hardly are the words uttered, "Blessed art

thou Simon son of Jonah, for my Father in heaven hath revealed it unto thee," than we hear from the same lips to the same apostle, "Get thee behind me Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thy thoughts are not the thoughts of God, but of men." And yet we can see that St. Peter's care for our Lord's safety, which prompted the "Be it far from thee, Lord," sprang from the same intense love as the faith which confessed Him as the Christ; only reverence and trust for a moment failed. The love, then, which Christ requires of us is an understanding love. There is an intellectual element even in human passion; and all true love must have an understanding regard for its object; all true love must respect what it loves—its plans, its purposes; and place no hindrance in the way of its free development on its own true lines. This is a lesson that all lovers have to learn, who wish to be true lovers; parents have to

learn it, wives and husbands have to learn it, the young have to learn it. It is a sad confession that some of the greatest wrongs on earth are wrought in the great name of love, dissociated from faith and hope.

But let us now turn to consider the place love holds to-day in our Christian faith. There is no denying that in St. Peter's case it was paramount. What process of reasoning he went through in weighing the claims of Jesus to be Messiah, we are not told; but assuredly, he being a Galilean fisherman, it was no abstract process; in all probability faith grew, as love grew, because the qualities that first attracted him proved more and more worthy of his faith and love. Perhaps in these days, some are inclined to undervalue the testimony of their hearts in considering the claims of Christ to their homage. Perhaps some of us, who have more learning than St. Peter, let our learning get in our way. If so, let us have

more confidence in our affections. Is Christ such a one as we can love? Can we imagine any one more lovable? "No," some one may say, "I can imagine no character more deserving of man's love, for what He was, and for what He did. But how can I be sure He was divine?" Well, is it enough that He said so? If not, would you love to have it so? If so, make the venture with St. Peter, and see if the hypothesis of His divinity approves itself reasonable in your life. See if it works. Life, after all, exists for living, not for speculation; and there are few questions really interesting and practical on which the intellect by itself can give an answer worth having. When the intellect has drawn up its case, and weighed its pros and cons, you must come back for a decision to the loving heart, to which God has made a revelation of Himself. "The heart has its reasons," said Pascal, "of which the reason knows nothing." If

our religious life depended upon the keenness of our intellect, how few could be saved; but it was the characteristic of the Christian faith that its first adherents and first missionaries were not men of great intellect, not "disputers of the world," but simple people of honest heart, who let their hearts lead them to love and revere what they instinctively saw to be worthy of love and reverence. "I thank thee, O Father," said Christ, "that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes"—revealed them to those whose high gift it is that they can love, and love only what is worthy.

Of course there are helps, and confirmations of the faith, of many kinds, some of which appeal to one type of mind, others to others. There is, especially, the great miracle of the resurrection, which more than anything else confirmed the faith of the first disciples after the rude heart-breaking shock of the

crucifixion; but all miracles are ineffectual to convince the mind that does not wish to believe, because it does not feel the attraction of Jesus of Nazareth. Love must come first; and faith and hope work by love; and hope maketh not ashamed.

X

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."—EPH. ii. 8.

THE new clearness with which in our own day the Catholic doctrine of our Lord's real humanity has been vindicated is bearing fruit in every department of theology; especially does it throw light upon the great dogma of Justification by Faith, and the controversies that have circled round it. The thought I would suggest to you on this subject is, the simple and, perhaps, obvious one, that our Lord being, as we believe, the Son of Man, the Second Adam, at once type

and source of a redeemed humanity, must have exhibited Himself, in its perfection, the characteristic life of true humanity, which is declared by the Church to be the life of *faith;* from which it would follow that any questions that arise as to the nature of faith and its relation to other faculties and graces may be best determined by an appeal to the picture of Christ's life preserved for us in the canonical gospels.

The true life of man, say all the apostles, is the life of faith. "We are justified by faith." We should have been justified by faith even if man had not sinned; and though we have sinned, and sinned grievously, it is still faith, and nothing but faith, that can justify us. How is this so?

Of course when we say it is "faith" that justifies, we mean faith in God; "Abraham believed *God*, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness"; and the word must

always be understood in Scripture with a personal object. Even that definition of faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," must be interpreted by the gloss that follows,—"they endured as seeing *Him* who is invisible"—and in the light of the examples by which it is illustrated. Further, by faith in God we must mean faith in the true God, God as He is revealed to us in Scripture, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; still more, the God of David and Isaiah, and the prophets; and still more, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: for there are gods many and lords many whom we are only too ready to fashion for ourselves and enthrone in heaven and put our trust in—gods of power and intellect and luck and wealth.

But, with this premised, we may still ask, Why should this faith in God, the true

God, be the true life of men; so that the words of eternal life written in howsoever many fashions upon the pages of Scripture to arrest all sorts and conditions of men, all grades of intellect, all dispositions and tempers, can yet be reduced to their lowest terms in this single word "faith"? "By *faith* we are saved." The answer to the question takes us back to the creation of man, and back again beyond that to the nature of the Creator God. It is the Christian creed that in the Godhead there is a Son who finds His true being in returning the Father's love; and further, that man was made through this Eternal Son, in His image, after His likeness; and so it follows that the true life of man must be after the likeness of the Son's life, a life of returning the Father's love, which is *faith*. And more even than that. The true life of man has always been not only in the image of the Eternal Son, but in

His strength. He did not make the world and then put it from Him, as a workman puts from him his finished work, as an artist leaves the adequate expression of his idea. He was *in* the world that He made, says St. John, and though the world knew Him not, yet to as many as received Him, He gave power. Power for what? To become sons of God—to live the life of faith. The souls that thirsted for righteousness drank of the spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. He was the light of the world, which the darkness could not overcome, but to which it yielded place gradually, as it broadened to perfect day. He, who was the Word, came into men's consciences a "still small voice," but ever clearer and fuller as age followed age; and in every age as many as heard and obeyed became the children of God, because they were inspired by the Eternal Son. And so it was by no trick of rhetoric

which sees its immediate subject everywhere, that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews declared "faith" to be the mainspring of all the old saintly lives, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire"; it was not, believe me, because the Apostle happened to be writing about faith, that he saw faith everywhere in this old history; it was because faith in God was the life of the Eternal Son, and therefore of all those who by His inspiration were adopted into sonship.

And then, in the fulness of time, the Word, who had been in this world from the beginning, became flesh, and lived a human life and died a mortal death, whose full significance for us men the Church has not yet exhausted; but one side of it we may sum, as the writer to the Hebrews does, in the words from Isaiah[1]: "I will

[1] Isa. iii. 2-5.

put my trust in him," with the comment "He was faithful to him that appointed him, not as a servant is faithful, but as a son." Surely Christ's life was the perfect life of faith in God. What other meaning is there in those prayers in the desert place, and on the Mount of Olives, in Gethsemane, and upon Golgotha? "I have glorified thee upon the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"; "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless it is not what I will, but what thou wilt"; "Father, into thy hands I surrender my spirit." These are the words of the Son of Man—man's type and perfection; and they are so because they are the words of man's archetype, the Eternal Son of God; and because He is not ashamed to call us brethren, they are written for our example.

But Christ does not leave us to a mere example. As at the first, the Word was

not content to create us and then leave us to ourselves; so neither when He took flesh was He content to exhibit to us for a moment this glorious life of faith, —glorious with the glory of the only begotten of the Father,—and then leave us to a hope, and a despair, of imitating it. Far from so: by His Spirit He resumed the infinite task that He had set Himself at the beginning, the task of bringing many sons to glory, the task of moulding our stubborn, wilful hearts into that same glorious pattern of faith. And so at Pentecost His Spirit once more moved upon the waters of generation; a voice once more awoke in men's hearts, and tongues as of fire cried out to God as Father. "We received the Spirit of Adoption."

What wonder then that faith should save us, when our faith in God is nothing less than the presence in us of the Eternal Son!

The *forma fidei* of which theologians disputed, the true nature and characteristic principle of faith, is not "obedience," though this must accompany it, nor is it "love," as others have taught, following the Latin version of St. Paul's great phrase, πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη, fides *formata* charitate, though faith in God is as inseparable from love of Him as faith and love are in earthly sonship; nor is it as Luther sometimes said—"the thought of Christ"; it is Christ Himself. We are accepted as sons "*in* the Beloved Son." It is the Spirit of Christ in us that constitutes our faith in God.

If this, then, be *faith*, what is *grace?* for we are saved through *faith* by *grace*. The word "grace" in Scripture expresses the divine nature or glory, in the act of being given; as when St. John says, "We saw his glory; and of his fulness we received grace for grace." So it is used in the common form of blessing, "Grace from God the Father."

And grace, we say, is the correlative of faith. When our hearts are lifted in faith to God, there comes, we say, an answer in grace. "Ascendit oratio, descendit gratia," and this by a necessary law. For faith is the Spirit of the Eternal Son in us, and the Spirit moves between the Father and the Son; so that there cannot be the movement of the Son in love to the Father, without the corresponding movement of the Father in love of the Son. There cannot, therefore, be faith without grace. This is the teaching of that great 17th chapter of St. John, which first teaches us that the unity of the Godhead consists in the exchange of glory, *i.e.* of comprehension and love, between Father and Son:—"Father, glorify the Son that the Son may glorify thee; I have glorified thee on the earth, and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self,"—and then goes on to declare that this union of glory is imparted to us:—"The glory which thou hast given

me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and thou in me." And so the full circle of the Godhead passes through the spirit of the simplest believer. It is plain, too, that this *faith*, because it is not of ourselves, but the gift of God, is also grace; it is, as we have insisted, the Spirit of God the Son; the apostles speak not only of the grace of the Father, but of the grace of Jesus Christ; and we speak of grace in that solemn sacrament to which we come to increase our faith, to be enabled to lift our hearts more strenuously to the Father; to realise more deeply and ever more deeply our part in the Holy Communion which subsists between the persons of the Godhead. And so all is grace, faith and all; yet not so as to destroy man's free-will. At the point in the human heart where the two divine streams should meet and mix, the Son glorifying the Father and He the Son, and so the work of redemption be

accomplished, a human barrier may interpose; man's will is strong enough to resist their currents, and man's will cannot be forced even by God, because that will is what it is by the grace of God.

But some young man who hears me may object: All this is high doctrine, but if my body is verily and indeed the temple of the Holy Spirit, why am I not perfectly righteous? As a matter of fact, though I use with thankfulness the means of faith, I am sadly conscious that, even at the best, my motives and actions leave a great deal to desire. Well, no doubt this is so, and it is most disappointing, but it is what Scripture leads us to expect. Some Christians indeed have taught, against Scripture and against experience, that the old desires of the flesh are at once and altogether overwhelmed by the desires of the Spirit. But our Lord Himself in the "Our Father" which is the typical prayer of faith for us men, has put

into our lips a clause, which the Eternal Son Himself could not utter, "Forgive us our trespasses." And so St. Paul prays for his converts, that "he who had begun a good work in them might continue it till the day of Christ." In fact this entry of the Spirit of Christ, by which we lift our hearts to God as our Father, and desire to obey Him, is often like the capture of the citadel in a fortified town, from which sallies must be made till all the nation of desires is brought into submission. The thing of supreme importance is to keep the citadel. For we men are, after all, a single principle. "Keep thy heart," says Solomon, "for out of that are the issues of life." If the citadel be securely held, the rest of Mansoul will be subdued in time. If man's heart look up sincerely to the Father, and in all its ways acknowledge Him, this is proof that Christ's Spirit is in Him, and Christ will communicate ever more and more of His fulness as

it is used—grace for grace—to resist and overcome the adversary. And so the old debate as to whether by justification is meant God's *accounting* or *making* us righteous, finds its reconciliation. He accounts us righteous through our faith, which is the presence in us of the Beloved Son; by which presence also, we thank God, we are actually becoming righteous.

In the second place, we may notice how many difficulties that have arisen as to the nature of this justifying faith may be set at rest by an appeal to the evidence of Christ's example. We have, in fact, a double evidence; we can appeal to what is recorded of our Lord's own faith in the Father, and we can appeal also to the nature of the faith He required in Himself, for He presented Himself to the world as the image of the Father, in order to draw men to the Father through Himself. Take, for instance, that old controversy as to whether faith justified

with or without love; and ask, Was our Lord's faith in the Father with or without love? At once there comes into memory such a text as this: "That the world may know that I *love* the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." Faith, therefore, is here represented as love working obedience. Or look at the disciples' faith in Christ. Was that apart from love? When the sinning woman threw herself at His feet in the Pharisee's house, He said to her "thy *faith* hath saved thee," and to the by-standers, "her sins are forgiven, for she *loved* much."

Or take a controversy often handled in this pulpit[1] with great subtlety—that between faith and reason. No doubt our test in this case is difficult to apply, because we have so little light on the development of our Lord's human nature. We are told, summarily, that He grew in wisdom. But when the thirty

[1] The University Pulpit in St. Mary's Church, Oxford.

years of training expired and He began to teach, we see that He had not disdained to employ the powers of the human mind in recognising the evidences of the Father's character, to be found in the natural world and in the course of human history. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow." Surely in such a commandment lies implicit a justification of natural science; just as in the constant reproof "have ye not read," we have the frank appeal to historical fact, even where it might seem to conflict with current theory. There is no trace of obscurantism in our Lord's treatment of these sciences. And so it was with His endeavour to attach the people to Himself. He insists again and again that faith is faith, that belief in Him must begin, not by the scrutiny of evidence, but by the attraction of His character, by the drawing of the Godhead in Him; in other words, by the simple charm of goodness—so that the children were in this respect

on a level with the wisest, nay, above them, as being less worldly-wise, and more sincere. Yet when faith had made its election, or its venture, call it what you please, and the disciples had left all and followed Him, how zealously does He come to the aid of faith with arguments, with illustrations, to clear away stumbling-blocks; how carefully He expounds in parable after parable the laws of the Divine Kingdom, and the methods of His working! And, finally, because faith is reasonable, He recognises that it must be able to give a reasonable account of itself in a creed, by answering the question: "Whom say ye that I, the Son of Man, am?" Is not that the relation of faith and reason to-day, as it was in the days of the patriarchs? Faith lays hold upon God, and reason says, "I beseech thee, tell me thy name."

But to many of us a more practical discussion is that which concerns faith and works. I remember once, somewhat in-

cautiously, praising the benevolence of some dissenters to a very Protestant lady, who astonished me by replying: "But don't you think I should be as charitable as they are, if I could believe my works would justify me!"

Let us ask, then, Did our Lord's faith in the Father display any such horror of good works? Was His life one of pure contemplation? Was it not rather a life best described in St. Peter's simple words to Cornelius: "who went about doing good, for God was with him." But then, of course, St. Paul must have meant something by all that passion of his against the "works of the law"; and the question arises, did he mean anything that applies to us who are not, by birth and early training, Hebrews? By the nature of the case we cannot appeal to our Lord's own example here, but we may ask, Did He foresee any danger for the Church, that made Him give His disciples any

warning against "works"? And then we at once recall His parable about justification, in which He told of a Pharisee who was full of good works, and a publican who had no works to speak of, only faith in God, and who yet was justified, while the Pharisee was not. This story puts the Epistle to the Romans into a picture that a child may understand. It teaches us in a way we can never forget that a man is not justified by his works, but by a personal relation to God of love and trust. We understand that works, in themselves good, may be done from bad motives. For you will hardly say that this Pharisee's works were in themselves evil. It is not a sin to fast, unless temperance has ceased to be a virtue; nor is it a sin to pay tithes, though the apathy of churchmen to the cruel poverty of so many of the country clergy would almost suggest the notion. No, the works were good: but it is plain they sprang not from any interest in God or man, from

faith, or love, or obedience, but from self-complacency. The "I thank God" with which the Pharisee's prayer opened was as purely formal as it often is with ourselves. As St. Matthew says, the parable was addressed to those who "trusted in themselves" for their righteousness. And faith in oneself cannot justify. Self-love may work the works of respectability, but hardly of righteousness. It is only faith and love to God the Father, which are the signs in us of the presence of the Eternal Spirit of Christ, that can render us acceptable to the Father and secure the blessing: "This too is my beloved son." "By faith we are saved through grace, not of works, lest any man should boast." But if faith does not issue, as that of Christ issued, in working the works of God, it follows inevitably that what we call our faith, is not faith at all.

XI

THE LESSON OF THE WILDERNESS

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness."—ST. LUKE iv. 2.

OUR Saviour drew a sharp contrast between John the Baptist and Himself in respect of social temper: "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, John came neither eating nor drinking": John was a hermit, living by choice far from the homes of men; Jesus was found in the busy streets of their cities, in their synagogues, at their tables. So that it is significant to be told of Him, that He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Let us endeavour to realise something of this significance.

(1.) What we are told here of the action of the Holy Spirit seems to reveal a principle which may throw light on several points of casuistry that are apt to perplex scrupulous minds. The question might well be asked: How can the Spirit which "makes men of one mind in a house," the Spirit that is the bond of unity in the Church, drive men into the wilderness apart from their fellows? How can the Spirit whom the creed declares to be "Giver of Life" lead men to fast? The key to the apparent contradiction lies in this, that the gifts of the Spirit are not all on one level, but in a scale—some higher, some lower; so that, where all cannot be enjoyed together, we are justified in putting aside the lower for the higher. The Holy Spirit is the giver of life, and therefore, other things being equal, the fuller life is the higher life; and so the life which accepts and enjoys the natural world is higher than the life of

abstinence; the least in the kingdom is greater than John the Baptist. And yet, in a higher interest still it may become our bounden duty to forgo the free life of enjoyment and betake ourselves to the wilderness, as our Lord did after His baptism, frankly allowing, as we do so, that what we surrender is not evil but good.

Take an instance familiar in every day's experience. Life we all acknowledge to be God's gift, and therefore to squander life is sin; but love is a higher gift than life, and therefore it is not sin but duty, following our Lord's teaching and example, as well as our own impulse, to lay down life in the interest of love, whether it be love of friend or love of country. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." Or sometimes a choice has to be made between one love and another; as between home-ties and love of country.

I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more,

sang the soldier poet; and the soldier makes the choice and quits wife and children to go to the wars; and the Christian conscience approves, and the wife and children with breaking hearts would not hold him back. A similar choice has to be made also between home-ties and love of the souls of men; and the missionary makes it and goes to convert the heathen. And there are times now and then when choice has to be made between home-ties and the love of God; times such as those near the end of our Lord's life, when He said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, he cannot be my disciple." And then because these also are the gifts of God, they can be surrendered. The double truth of the principle seems to be that all these things are indeed gifts of the Spirit, but in

an ascending scale of value. All are God's gifts; remember that, and you may thank God and yet not take the gift; you may put by one gift for another; but forget that, and you make confusion, and what confusion! Forget it, and you have those who magnify virginity as in itself an ideal state, and so condemn themselves by condemning the mothers who brought their scrupulous souls into the world; or you have those who call wine-drinking a sin, condemning their Master's first miracle and last sacrament: whereas all that these people want they have in the teaching of Scripture, in the doctrine that God's gifts have degrees of value and subserve His purposes; that while wine makes glad the heart of man, and bread strengthens his heart, yet man does not live by bread alone, or by wine alone; and that while marriage was instituted in the time of man's innocency, there are yet disciples who for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake

do not marry. "Covet earnestly the best gifts."

(2.) Secondly, we have to consider the purpose of our Lord's retirement into the wilderness. He went there under the guidance of the Spirit to be alone, before His work began among the crowds. He went there, we may reverently say, to plan out His life, to search out His spirit, to face and lay all the temptations that could interpose between His purpose and its accomplishment. And because He is our pattern, this retirement has its significance for us. For us also the wilderness has lessons, and they are two, or rather two in one—to learn to know God and to learn to know ourselves.

Nowhere so soon does a man lose his conscience as in a crowd. He puts it, as it were, into commission; and where no one feels responsible, no one puts upon his conduct the necessary checks. In an

extreme case you see this in those acts of wild horror which crowds perpetrate in times of revolution—"the stormy people, unsad and ever untrue"—; but you see it also in large gatherings of educated gentlemen and churchmen, where some word, some appeal to base passion, is caught up, and echoed by hundreds who would singly have been ashamed to be so overcome. You see it also in the daily public life of communities. Abuses are tolerated and wrongs are done, because the responsibility, and therefore the blame, is difficult to apportion and is so readily shifted. Hence it is that office which brings single responsibility is often good for a man, since it leaves him no one else to shelter behind; he must act for himself on his own judgment, and by his judgment he will be judged.

But if man thus so often goes wrong when he acts in concert with his fellows, why, we cannot but ask, has God given us

these social instincts? for certainly those who have them not are the exception. The answer is found in that Christian doctrine of the Spirit to which I have already referred. The doctrine of the Christian creed is that the Spirit is the Life Giver, that all life is His gift, but that there is lower and higher. We can trace the Spirit of God in the world dealing out His gifts of life from the dawn of creation, in an ever-ascending scale of wonderful capabilities and instincts until the whole is crowned in Man. Each creature occupies his place, higher or lower, and though they may make war upon each other, yet within the circle of each life there is unity. But with man there came a difference. The gift of life to him flowers into self-consciousness and self-determination; the power to know himself and to know God. And that first of the distinctive gifts of the Spirit to man

brings into man's life itself the possibility of a division into higher and lower aims, and so a higher and lower nature. And therefore, the fact that certain instincts belong to us as animals no longer carries with it the proof that they are to be indiscriminately exercised by us as men. Every instinct now has to be brought to the bar of reason and conscience, and to submit to interrogatories; the desire, whatever it may be, the proposed action, has to approve itself in all its detail of circumstance, its particulars of place and time and manner and degree, as justifiable in a being who is no longer animal but man. Now the habit of association of which we are speaking is no less an animal instinct than the rest. No one who has seen sheep in a field, huddled together in one corner when the whole meadow was before them where to choose, will deny that gregariousness is an animal instinct: and some human societies,

where one leads and the rest follow, do not seem of a much higher type than this. To eat or drink together for mutual satisfaction in one corner of a field may be on a level with eating and drinking together in a room. What will make the difference? Only this, that the society shall be rational and conscientious; that what calls the people together—work or talk or play—shall be worthy of men and women made in God's image. No Christian need find fault with feasts and sports; they are right, nay, they are necessary, because man is animal as well as so much more; but man shows his true manhood in taking occasion by the needs of the flesh to promote the nobler ends of the spirit. He shares his time or his food with others as an opportunity of sharing his friendship or his ideas with them. He converts the mere instinct for association into a conscious interest in his fellows, into a desire to be benefited by

them, and, if it may be, benefit them in return.

But then, it will be clear a man cannot go into society with these objects who has not at other times in solitude arrived at a knowledge of what he has to give, and what he wishes to receive. If he has not done so, he but uses the society of others as an escape from himself; and if all men did so, companionship would be useless, because merely animal. The ideal of society, though it need not be consciously present to the mind, is that each member should bring into the common stock what he himself has become in his individual private life, and so by comparison and criticism of one with another come nearer to the truth or the best. Now this, which is true of all social intercourse, holds especially of its religious and moral elements. Here if each does not bring the light of his own instructed conscience to bear upon points

at issue, the whole of society must deteriorate, both in principles and in conduct. To take a simple example, let us say that at some friendly meeting—as may easily happen in Oxford as elsewhere—there comes up for discussion a question of character. The person discussed happens to be unpopular, and one of the company makes a bitter comment, or lays some cruel charge, which hits the mood of the majority. What shall I do? Shall I bring my own judgment to confront the mistaken or malignant judgment of others, or shall I keep silence because numbers are against me, or acquiesce because fashion is against me, and so give the blunder or the lie the seal of my confirmation? I have taken so simple an instance because it is one that is constantly occurring in every society; but this root sin of society, the desire to follow the crowd, will, of course, take innumerable special forms according to the

cultivation of our particular circle. In one society the temptation may be to tolerate coarse profanity; in another to allow popular views on politics or religion — views that we consider false and harmful — to pass without protest. Now, the courage to confront social prejudice is the fruit of private thought and private prayer; it must be learned in the wilderness. What our Lord gained in His human nature, as the Gospel shows us, by His sojourn in the wilderness of Judæa, was the determination to seek and use the society of men in order to do them good: turning neither to right nor left along the path He had chosen, although He foresaw that it must lead across all the prejudices of the leaders of opinion, and at last end in a shameful death.

(3.) But the text presents not only this general application to all social life; it seems to have further a special bearing upon the

lives of you, fathers and brethren, who here in retirement from the world are giving shape to the world to come. Oxford—may we not say—is the "wilderness" of the spirit of England; a wilderness indeed of unequalled beauty, of a beauty surpassing even that "sweet recess" by the Cephissus where Plato pondered on the things unseen, a wilderness too to which many gather as they gathered to the Baptist; but still a desert place, withdrawn from the busy life of the world. The world often speaks of you as visionaries, as a city of dreamers; but may it not be, if your young men see visions and your old men dream dreams, that they are the dreams and visions of no idle imagination, but visions of a truth whose outline, seen through the shows of sense, is still but wavering and vague, and dreams of a perfection whose lineaments as yet elude the waking sight? You have been called the devotees of lost causes; but a cause is not lost because it

has yet to be won on the larger stage of the world; the womb of ideas is not their grave; we need but regard the history of that unique and magnificent idea which first took shape on earth in the solitude of the Judæan desert to be assured that the nobler the idea, the more certain it is to be tried

> by tribulations, injuries, insults,
> Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence.

But the truth is great and it prevails, and reaches at last its Easter triumph. And besides this, which is your own distinctive work, you send out also year by year into the great world sons, yes and daughters, upon whom you have laid your hands, and conveyed to them some portion of your spirit; and you hear with satisfaction or with disappointment the rumour of their achievement there—watching, sometimes perhaps wistfully, from your "specular

mount" the great shows of peace and war in which they are playing their parts:

> As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,
> And oft beyond; to south the Persian bay
> And inaccessible the Arabian drought:

and then you turn back to your own work, the shaping of opinion, the clarifying of the vision of truth. May Oxford, dreaming amid her spires, never grow ashamed of her dreams!

And to you, also, my younger brethren, my text seems to have a particular message. It says to you, the great world lies before you in which you have a part to play; but here is a brief period assigned you in which to make ready; use it to plan your course, use it to equip yourself; the Spirit has led you into the wilderness, use well the opportunity; be disciples of the best in mind and in soul. Nothing is more striking in the story of our Lord's life than the long pre-

paration He deemed necessary before He entered upon His career; it could not have been that all those years since He reached manhood He was blind and deaf to the sorrows and sins of His people, to their need of His gospel; but He waited, leaving us an example. For you there is surely not less but more need of waiting, not less but more need of the training that comes from meditation and study and a formed habit of good life; not less but more need of facing the temptations that beset the life of the child of God in the world, before that life is undertaken. I would speak especially to those who look forward to carrying on in the world the work of their Master, and I would say, do not let a premature absorption even in practical philanthropy interfere with what is the proper work of this place and time. The years you can spend here roll by very quickly, and then you may find yourself at once set down at the school-

masters' or the preachers' desk; and whether then the word it should have been yours to deliver has taken articulate shape in your heart and brain will depend upon the manner in which you have used your sojourn in the wilderness. Too often, in the press of business, young teachers and preachers have to look back with regret upon wasted opportunities, upon days and years that were so full of leisure for thought, but were not spent in thought, and now are past irrecoverably. Be teachable, then, be in earnest. "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." "In your patience you shall win your souls." I may seem in my sermon to-day to have been merely giving good advice, than which nothing is more fruitless. But if advice is a barren seed, ideas are not barren, and my text carries an idea, which if it be taken into the life will never fail of its fruit. The idea is this, that whether you be masters or scholars,

whether your home be here for a few years only or for a lifetime, you have been led hither by the Spirit of God for divine purposes.

Once more, as life has its preparation, so should each day have. Those moments of prayer in our secret chamber before we open our door upon the world are like a spiritual prologue anticipating each day's drama—a prologue in which we rehearse in its essence what for each of us is the truth lying behind all the entanglement of the world's phenomena, the action of the three great Persons of the drama, God, and Satan, and our own soul. For these are the true forces of life, and in this divine mystery the prologue not only anticipates the course of the drama that is to follow; it controls it. To realise in solitude the presence of that strong champion by whose aid alone Satan can be worsted and driven off, is to secure that when the curtain shall at last ring down after the

fifth act, however protracted the struggle, however complicated the issues, however bloody the event of the tragedy, Satan shall be seen like lightning fallen from heaven.

XII

THE VICTORY OVER DEATH [1]

"Then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."—1 Cor. xv. 54.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of the purpose of our Blessed Lord's incarnation, describes it as being undertaken that He might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Perhaps at a first glance such a view of the universal fear of death may appear overstated. For it is obvious to recall such heroic exploits as that of Leonidas and his three hundred

[1] Preached at the Temple Church on January 27, 1901, on the Sunday after the death of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria.

Spartans who died at Thermopylæ, when the pass they were set to guard was betrayed, fighting against overwhelming odds without even a forlorn hope of victory; although, had they chosen, they might all have retired through the pass in safety. They died for honour's sake. Or we remember Regulus, the Roman general, whom tradition described as putting aside the entreaties of wife and children, and going back to his Carthaginian prison and a certain death, rather than break his plighted word. Surely, we say, for these, and for such as these, death had no sting—even before Christ came; surely for them death was swallowed up in victory.

But if we said so, we should be guilty of a confusion. For it is not the act of dying that the Apostle is speaking of, but the fact of being dead. The act of dying, though nature revolts from it, men have always been found ready to meet under the

influence of any strong passion. Not honour only, and the anticipation of an immortal memory, but revenge, or love, or even grief, nay, even another fear, as we see in the case of so many suicides, has availed to steel the sinews against the fear of the last enemy. But the fear of being dead is a deeper passion; to know that horror in its depth, you must not go to the field of battle, or to the patriot's scaffold, where the enthusiasm of a great cause casts out every other feeling, nor must you go to the bed of sickness—you must go to the thinker, to the poet, when his thoughts are most vigorous and most at liberty. And you find this dread whenever a race full of vitality has reached the stage of civilisation when it can reflect upon its own life. You find it among the Greeks, as far back as the Odyssey, where the ghost of Achilles is made to say to the far-wandering prince who came to seek him among the shades:—

> Rather would I in the sun's warmth divine
> Serve some poor churl that drags his days in grief
> Than the whole lordship of the dead were mine.

You find it still more in the tragedians, who wrote at a time when men had begun to doubt whether after death there awaited them even so dim and bloodless a life as that of the Homeric shades. But nowhere do you find this shrinking from destruction so poignantly expressed as among the Hebrews; and it was probably the cries over mortality in the Old Testament that the writer of the letter to the Hebrews had most definitely in mind.

"My heart is disquieted within me and the fear of death has fallen upon me. Return, O Lord, and deliver my soul, O save me for thy mercy's sake. For in death there is no remembrance of thee; and who will give thee thanks in the pit?" "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee?" Can it declare thy truth? Cast

away among the dead like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more, and they are cut off from thy hand. The living, the living, he shall praise thee. "O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit; so wilt thou recover me and make me to live."

In such passages as these you realise what the terror of the grave had become to the pious Israelite. He had no revelation of a life beyond. God was assuredly the God of the living and not of the dead; and to pass beyond His power, out of His Kingdom, to fall out of the hand of the living God who had stayed him from his youth up—could anything be more horrible? That God who had made the everlasting hills should have made the age of man—man so much higher and nobler than they—only a span long, and altogether vanity, could anything be more heart-breaking? nay, it

was impossible. It was not to be thought! And so out of the heart of this horror of the under world where God is not, and where all things are forgotten, there gradually shaped itself that hope of a resurrection based on faith in God, of which the first vague premonition comes in this prophecy of Isaiah, "He shall swallow up death in victory"; which breaks out again and again in the later Psalms — "Thou shalt guide me here with thy counsel, and afterward (somehow, somewhere) receive me with glory." "As for me, I shall behold thy presence in righteousness, and when I awake I shall be satisfied with thy beauty" —until in the Apocryphal books it has become an assured article of belief: "The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God."

The secret of the bitterness of death to these men was therefore twofold. It was, first of all and in chief, that they feared

to be out of God's hand, out of His memory, cut off from communication with Him by prayer and praise. All that ordered ritual, in which they had touched hands through the darkness with the Eternal Father of their spirits, all that experience of communion which had been the best part of their life, was to end in nothing, to cease as a sound ceases in the air; that was the sickening dread; and the only cure for such a dread was the assurance anticipated by prophet and psalmist, and at last brought to them by Christ: "My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." And even more comfortably still, after His resurrection: "Fear not, I am the first and the last and the living one, and I was dead, and *behold*, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of death and the grave." That first bitter-

ness of death passed away for ever from all Christian souls in the light of the first Easter morning.

But again, if you read the Psalms to which I referred just now, the 6th or the 30th or the 88th, you will observe that while the great bitterness of death to the pious Jew lay in the fact that he was driven away from the presence of God, a second grief was that all the works at which he had laboured here had to be resigned. Here were men using their lives well for the benefit of their fellows, striving for the cause of God and righteousness against a crooked generation, doing work that none could do so well as they—it may be, that none had thought of doing before or would care to do when they were gone. And in the very midst, perhaps, of this zealous life—all too short even if it had been allowed to run to its natural end—death appears and gives the signal which

there is no gainsaying; and the cherished task has to be left, a tangle instead of a finished web. "I said in my heart, as it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth unto me, and why was I then more wise; therefore I hated my labour which I had taken under the sun, because I should leave it to the man that shall be after me, and who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool?"

How did Christ assuage that second sorrow of death, a very real and natural and poignant sorrow to all who live for any higher cause than their own pleasure or success? First by His clearer teaching as to God's providence; by His assurance that God did not make the world ages ago and then leave it to chance or fate, but still works His will in it:—"My Father worketh hitherto";—so that the issues of our work may well be left in His hand, who alone inspired its undertaking and will inspire others to carry it on. And secondly

by His teaching that death, so far from checking or frustrating our labours as we imagine, is God's great means to quicken and propagate them. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; *but if it die*, it bringeth forth much fruit." It was in dependence on this law that our blessed Lord Himself looked forward past the agonies of His own shameful death, and was satisfied, seeing the new world begotten through the travail of His soul; and the experience of all the ages has confirmed His teaching. We have learned that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church; that generations to come build the sepulchres of the prophets whom their fathers killed; that a voice which all its days may have been crying through the world's Babel of voices to inattentive ears, speaks at last in a stillness when it sounds from beyond the tomb. This last great bitterness of death vanishes in the consideration of the Cross.

We had need, brethren, we Londoners, of all our faith in this last lesson of our Master when, ten days ago, we bore to their last resting-place in his own Cathedral the mortal remains of our Bishop. "What a mind," we said, "was here o'erthrown." Who can be found with equal genius of wisdom and of sympathy to tend the grievous wounds of our Church, and to temper the wine with the oil, the discipline with the encouragement, so as to give it a fair recovery. And we remembered that our only hope lay, as it always lies, in the Lord of the Church, who cares for it more than we can; and under Him in this great law of the corn of wheat which bears fruit in death.

Must it not be, we ask, that those alike who have made conscience of stirring up strife and those who have made conscience of disobedience, will see themselves at last in the naked light of truth that shines

from beyond the grave, stripped of all sophistication; and will be driven to put the question, How much have I helped by my selfish policy to bow down those already overburdened shoulders? Can it be that while we thought we were doing God service, we were helping to kill His minister? Can it be that those old prophecies of God's servant, so perfectly fulfilled in our Saviour, but true in their degree of every faithful servant of God, have again been verified, and by our means? We hid our faces from him, and despised him, calling him no true shepherd, taking our own way like stupid sheep, and he bore with us and reasoned with us till his health broke. If it should occur to any conventional reader of the Scriptures, whether clerk or layman, that those terrible words, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities," have a perpetual application to any shepherd of souls who suffers for the

blind folly of his flock, may God give them grace to finish the verse, "His chastisement shall be the chastisement of our peace."

And then, hardly had we recovered the shock of this unexpected blow, than with the whole Empire we were stunned and stupefied by the news of the illness of our revered Queen, soon ending in her death. We all knew of course that monarchs like other men must obey the law of nature; that the days of our age are but threescore years and ten, and that with fourscore years comes inevitable labour and sorrow, and a quick passing; but the Queen had been for most of us, throughout our lives, so essential an element in our world, so inseparable a part of our thought of England, that it seemed as if it must be so always; and even now we cannot think of her as dead.

What is the thought uppermost in our minds this morning, as we remember her before God? Deep, inexpressible sorrow

for our own loss—this we cannot help feeling; the nation, the Empire is in mourning; these trappings of woe are an all too inadequate index of the grief within; but we would not be selfish even in our grief; through our tears we can thank God in the words of our ancient collect, that He has taken to Himself the soul of our dear mother here departed, after so long a life of service, before she had known the infirmity of mind that age inevitably brings at the last. And with this thankfulness, which is half pain, there rises also another thankfulness, due to a profound sense of God's mercy to our nation, in having vouchsafed to us for the greater part of the momentous century which has just closed, a Sovereign who has ruled us with the wisdom of goodness, and the gentleness of perfect sympathy, and whom from the bottom of our hearts we have admired and loved.

We have had kings upon our throne in the past whose funeral sermon might fitly

have been preached from that text in Hosea, "I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath"; but the whole nation, whatever our political and religious divisions, has long been convinced that God gave us *this* Queen in loving kindness, because He had a good will to us; and now that the time of her departure has come, we are sure that not the least of God's blessings will issue from her death. Death, according to the ancient prophecy, will be swallowed up in victory. For death, as Christ taught us to think of it, is the last talent given to His faithful servants to be used in His service; in another sense than the Latin poet's —"spatium vitae extremum *inter munera* ponit"—for it is the falling of the ripe corn of wheat into the ground to form the seed of perpetual harvests. It is so with the death of every Christian; it will be so with the death of our Christian Queen. As the Empire comes to ask and learn more about the

secret of her influence, the nobility of her character will more evidently appear and stamp itself upon their imagination as an ideal of Queenship, and womanhood, and the good life.

How shall we formulate to ourselves the inspiration that her people may hope to gather from the memory of such an example?

(1.) In the first place, we may say she has illustrated upon the throne of this land the true idea of Kingship; that a king should reign not for his own pleasure but for the welfare of his people; and in consequence she has received the true loyalty of the heart as well as of the knee. It is true that our constitutional monarchy does not leave scope for the initiation of striking policies, and it shrouds the part played by the monarch from the popular gaze; but whenever in this way or that the veil has been lifted, we have caught a glimpse that could not be mistaken of a mind and heart and

will wholly devoted to the nation's good. The prime minister has recently spoken of the Queen's passionate patriotism. The growing recognition of this, the growing conviction that above the strife of parties there was a calm judgment and a resolute will, with no personal motives to bias or enfeeble, but a large experience to support and direct, and that this will and judgment were inspired by one ambition, and one only, to promote her people's prosperity; this slowly growing conviction bore witness to itself in the acclamations of the Empire upon Her Majesty's Jubilee, which those who heard them will never forget; and that conviction, which has sunk deep into our hearts, cannot but bear fruit in the lives of the humblest of us, in a more steady and determined devotion to our duty (to whatever station in the commonwealth we have been called), and in a greater sincerity of life and of purpose.

(2.) Secondly, our Queen will live in our memory as one who has paid the respect of a lifetime to God's ordinance of the family; who has been herself, even in an eminent degree, true wife and true mother. Of what supreme importance the example of the throne is and must be upon the domestic habits of a people, those will appreciate best who know the social history of some previous reigns; but how salutary in our generation has been the royal example, any one may see who has remarked in some neighbour countries the tendency to despise the marriage bond as a merely conventional arrangement, and to shrink from the divinely imposed labour of bearing children. There are disquieting symptoms that our own country is not untouched by these maladies; may God grant that the noble example of the highest lady in the land may not be lost upon those who make the claims of social life an excuse for refusing the obligations of God's primeval

law; and who tend by the spreading example of their selfishness to bring the Empire into peril.

(3.) And then, we all feel that in Her Majesty the Queen we had an example of the paradox of the philosophical Roman Emperor, who said, "*Even* in a palace life may be lived well." If you speak to any of the simpler people about the Queen, they are sure to tell you, "The Queen was a good woman." That is what has most touched their imaginations. They read of her careful truthfulness, of the charity of her reticence, they have had constant evidence of her sympathy with suffering, and of the particularity of her interest, and so the Royal Lady has become to them, as it were, a monument of the triumph of the Christian religion in its application to the details of life, where the Christian life is supposed to be most difficult; where, at least, excuse is most commonly made for disregarding its

precepts. "Even in a palace life may be lived well." Henceforth, then, let truthfulness and purity and unworldliness be reckoned royal virtues, and find loyal imitators throughout the length and breadth of England.

It has been well said that the Queen reigned "by sheer force of character." Character, the Christian character, is the one thing needful in life; it is the only thing we can carry with us when we die. At the same time it is a gift that we can bequeath as an ideal, nay, as an inspiration, to our posterity, as long as any memory of us at all survives. We can well believe, and we shall hope and pray, that more than all others the late Queen's example may inspire him who is to-day her chiefest mourner, and who inherits her throne and our allegiance. It was said of a Roman Emperor that because he knew his fame would never die he permitted himself no unworthy action. We are sure that our own loved Sovereign's motive

was simpler than this, being nothing but the hearty desire to serve God and her people to the utmost of her power; but the fact is true of her, if not the motive; the fact that she permitted herself no unworthy action, and the consequence will follow that her fame will never die. "Her name shall endure for ever among the posterities which shall be blessed through her." "Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates."

THE END

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